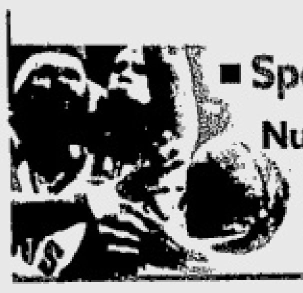


- **Sports / A26**

Nuggets shut down Spurs; Suns, Heat trample rivals

- **Entertainment / A2-1**

Talent managers seek Unesco help against scandal TV

- **Across / A17**

3 rebels killed in new clash in Bulacan

- **World / A10**

50 dead in Japan train accident

Hu arriving tonight for 3-day state visit

By Christine O. Avendaño

CHINESE President Hu Jintao starts his three-day state visit to Manila today with a hectic schedule that includes addressing Congress and witnessing the signing of three business agreements between the Philippines and China.

Hu, his wife Liu Yongqing and the rest of his

HU ARRIVING/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Expert says patients at mercy of specialists

By Christian Esguerra

OVERDOSE SA ESPESYALISTA!

DOCTORS are not only leaving the country to become nurses. They are leaving patients at the mercy of overpriced specialists. There are so many doc-

EXPERT/ A7

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Tuesday, April 26, 2005 ★★ 48 pages / 4 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 137 P18
website: www.inq7.net

Meralco rates up by 22¢

NO TO ARMM POLLS Fighters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front assemble in the jungles of Barangay Kinebaka in Datu Odin Sinsuat town in Maguindanao as their leaders formally declare their rejection of the Aug. 8 elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The MILF has accused past and present officials of the ARMM of doing nothing to uplift the plight of the Moro people. *(See story in Across the Nation, Page A17.)*

JEOFFREY MAITEM, PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Per-kWh increase reflected in June bills

By Abigail L. Ho
Business

SOME four million customers of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) will have to bear an additional charge of 21-22 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) beginning in June as the impact of the recently approved National Power Corp. (Napocor) rate increase is reflected on their monthly bills.

The average residential customer of Meralco, who uses about 200 kWh of electricity a month, will have to shell out P42 to P44 more as a result of the rate increase.

The additional charge, to be reflected on the generation charge component of the Meralco bill, is less than half the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC)-approved rate adjustment for the Luzon grid of the state-owned Napocor.

The Meralco franchise area covers Metro Manila, Bulacan, Rizal and Cavite, and parts of Laguna, Batangas and Quezon.

Malacañang defended the new power rate increase as something the country has to go through to ensure that the economy would flourish.

"We have to bite the bullet to gain a better economic footing through ... the Napocor rate hike," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

At a news briefing, Bunye said Malacañang was "definitely not" insensitive to the plight of the people amid the high prices of basic

MERALCO/ A8

Name Big 3 of 'jueteng,' solons urge whistle-blower

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Michael Lim Ubac

LAWMAKERS want to know the identities of the three relatives of a top government official known by their code names M1, M2 and JS7 who are allegedly the biggest recipients of payoffs from "jueteng" operations in the country.

"I am calling for a Senate investigation to unmask the persons behind the code names M1, M2 and JS7," Senate President Franklin Drilon said.

Drilon said he would file a resolution calling for an investigation of the beneficiaries of the illegal numbers game after the INQUIRER reported how the relatives of the top government official had been raking in millions of pesos as protection money from jueteng operators.

Drilon said Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. had been calling for an inquiry into the alleged failure of the Philippine National Police and local officials to implement Republic Act No. 9287, the law enacted last year against jueteng, a P30-billion-a-year industry.

A ranking police official said M1, M2 and JS7 were getting a total of P2 million a month from police officers in just one region in Luzon, reducing the take of the officers to P3 million. The P2 million was on top of what the trio receive from operators of the illegal numbers game.

The INQUIRER source said the relatives of the top government official were also

NAME/ A8

PRESIDING Justice Romeo Brawner leads "cañao" festivities in Baguio City.

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

CA presiding justice is Genuine Ifugao

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Many of the country's top court officials are probably relieved that Justice Romeo Brawner, Court of Appeals presiding justice, won't be wearing his tribal dress to work.

Court of Appeals justices were both amused and surprised when Brawner, 69, appeared in a red and black G-string, a large woven blanket and an Ifugao headdress at a *cañao* (ritual feast) that he tendered for them here on Thursday.

Brawner offered the *cañao* as thanksgiving to the Cordillera gods for his appointment as Court of Appeals presiding justice, the first Igorot appointed to the position.

Brawner reintroduced himself to the justices by explaining that his attire is worn by the *kadangyan*, the title for rich families of his tribe.

"I [grew up] in Kiangan, Ifugao, [and even had] my high school there. I am always ready to dance the Ifugao dance," he said.

Associate Justice Remedios Salazar-Fernando said they were not aware of Brawner's heritage until that night.

"But his [lineage] was never a factor in his appointment. He's a good administrator," Fernando said.

Other justices, however, acknowledged that Brawner's indigenous Filipino background would temper many of the controversial cases that have a direct effect on poverty.

Brawner's home province is Ifugao, home of the World Heritage-inscribed rice terraces and the fourth poorest province in the Philippines, according to the Na-

COURT/ A8

Top activist leaders now targets

By Norman Bordadora

(Last of two parts)

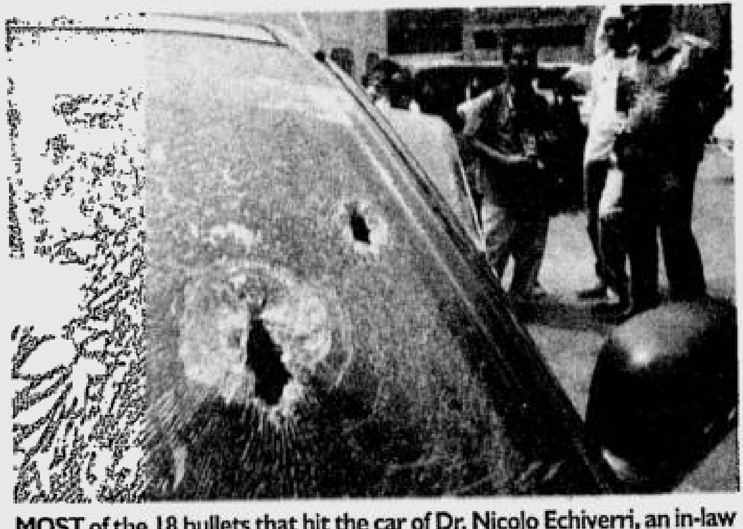
SPECIAL REPORT

TWO years ago, on April 21, human rights workers Eden Marcellana and Eddie Gumanoy were shot dead by men who have since been linked by Karapatan and other militant groups to then Col. Jovito Palparan, commander of the Army's 204th Infantry Brigade in Oriental Mindoro.

The deaths of Marcellana and Gumanoy were among the severe violations of human rights recorded under the present administration after President Macapagal-Arroyo had a falling out with militants who had supported her during Edsa II and ran alongside her candidates in the 2001 national and local elections.

Palparan, who has since been promoted to major general and served as head of the Philippine contingent to Iraq, is again being linked to alleged political assassinations in his jurisdiction in Eastern Visayas. He is the commander of the Army's 8th Infantry Division based in Catbalogan, Samar.

TOP ACTIVIST/ A7



ERIK ARAZAS

MOST of the 18 bullets that hit the car of Dr. Nicolo Echiverri, an in-law of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos, were aimed at the driver.

Doc's killing another tragedy in Abalos clan

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Luige A. del Puerto

THE DOCTOR had just left his house and was passing a street corner when at least three men raked his car with gunfire yesterday.

Wounded, Dr. Nicolo Echiverri—an in-law of Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos—struggled to steer his Mitsubishi Lancer away. But the gunmen gave chase, firing repeatedly at the driver's side, wanting to make sure he would not live.

Nearby, another doctor, Arsenio Abalos, elder brother of the Comelec chief, was driving home when four men carrying handguns walked past his car.

DOC'S/ A6

ERIK ARAZAS

THE VICTIM'S mother-in-law, Roda Abalos, weeps at the hospital upon learning of his death.

4 laborers probed on Ramos slay

By Luige A. del Puerto and Tarra V. Quismundo

POLICE said yesterday they would invite for questioning four laborers who had worked around the house of Assistant Foreign Secretary Alicia Ramos two weeks before she was murdered in her bedroom last Sunday.

Quoting relatives, National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Deputy Director General Avelino Razon said there had been an earlier attempt to rob the Ramos home.

That was why Ramos and her sister Leticia—who lived alone together and worked at the Department of Foreign Affairs—had the fence outside their house raised two weeks ago, he said.

"We will invite for questioning a group of laborers who had worked to elevate the fence of their home," Razon said.

He said that while they were working on the fence, the laborers apparently got a chance to enter the property and see what the place looked like.

Police earlier said Ramos had been strangled on her bed but later investigation apparently did not support this.

Robbers barged into the Makati home of the Ramos sis-

4 LABORERS/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY ERIKA SARMIENTO, PDI RESEARCH/04/26/05

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

SPOT INSPECTION
President Macapagal-Arroyo makes a surprise inspection at the licensing office of the Land Transportation Commission in Quezon City. The LTO marked its 93rd anniversary yesterday.

VAL HANDUMON

POLLUTION HALL OF SHAME

8 companies receive 2005 'Lason' awards

By Blanche S. Rivera

IF YOU can't stop them, shame them.

This is the rationale behind the annual Lason (Poison) Awards which has become an effective way of compelling firms to comply with government standards for waste-water treatment. It started as a shame campaign for firms polluting the Pasig River, but beginning this year it included environmental despoilers throughout the country.

For 2005, the country's top polluters still came from Metro Manila, however. The popular Barrio Fiesta restaurant in Mandaluyong City led this year's awardees for failing to install a waste-water treatment facility despite being reprimanded by the Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB), a quasi-judicial agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, nearly a decade ago.

3 in metropolis

Three more of the eight Lason awardees this year chosen by a network of environmentalists, along with the DENR, were also based in the metropolis.

These were Macro Funders Development Corp. also in Mandaluyong, Euro Swiss in Makati City and Goldilucks Steam Laundry in Valenzuela City.

"It's still Metro Manila. That's why all the rivers here are dead. Notice that even the other awardees are from cities," Sagip Pasig executive director Myrna Jimenez told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Robina Farms II in Antipolo, Rizal; IPI Distillery Inc. in Negros Oriental, Julu Cornstarch Corp. in Davao City and Albay Agro-Industrial Development Corp. in Albay rounded out this year's Lason awardees.

Pending cases

All the eight awardees have pending cases before the PAB. They will be closed down or penalized if they fail to comply with PAB directives for waste-water treatment within a year, Jimenez said.

This was the second time Barrio Fiesta was given a Lason Award, Jimenez noted. The first time was in 1995.

"It has consistent violations and a history of noncompliance," Jimenez said.

The PAB issued a cease-and-desist order against the restaurant in August 1996 and again in November 2000 for its violations. Barrio Fiesta then diverted its waste water to a septic tank to be able to continue to operate, Earth Day Network Philippines said.

Water samples

Water samples taken from the septic tank in July 2003 showed that its bio-oxygen demand (BOD) level, which indicates the pollution load in waste water, was 1,196 milligrams per liter, way above the 79 mg/l standard.

Robina Farms had a BOD level of 964 mg/l, according to the latest water sampling done in February. It has failed to conform to the standard level since the PAB issued its first warning in January last year. The PAB is also readying a cease-and-desist order against the firm.

Julu Cornstarch Corp. was the subject of complaints by the community surrounding its operations in Davao City. PAB regional officials discovered during an April 12 visit that the plant continued to discharge waste water despite a cease-and-desist order.

Albay Agro-Industrial Development Corp.'s discharge of grease registered a rating of 9 mg/l, almost twice the 5 mg/l acceptable level.

Compliance

Among the first Lason awardees were Jollibee, Shoe Mart, Selecta, Asahi, Coca-Cola Bottling Corp. and Goldilocks bakeshop. All of them improved their facilities after being cited.

Lason awardees who continue to pollute are Andok's, Manuela (now known as Star Mall), Savory restaurant and Universal Robina Corp., Jimenez said.

Lason awardees are chosen by a committee composed of representatives from Earth Day Network Phils., Communication Foundation for Asia, Sagip Pasig, Greenpeace, Integrated Bar of the Philippines, and DENR-attached agencies Laguna Lake Development Authority, Environmental Management Bureau, Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

US Army general here for terror talks

THE US Pacific Command's logistics chief arrived in Manila yesterday for counter-terrorism talks with Filipino officials, the US embassy said.

US Army Brig. Gen. James Lewis Kennon will review US-Philippine "military-to-military security cooperation activities" including the Philippine military's procurement reform program.

The visit is under the "regular series of meetings between military and security officials of both countries to discuss programs for sustained counter-terrorism capability," the embassy added.

The US government is helping train and equip the Philippine forces against al-Qaida-linked Muslim militants in Mindanao.

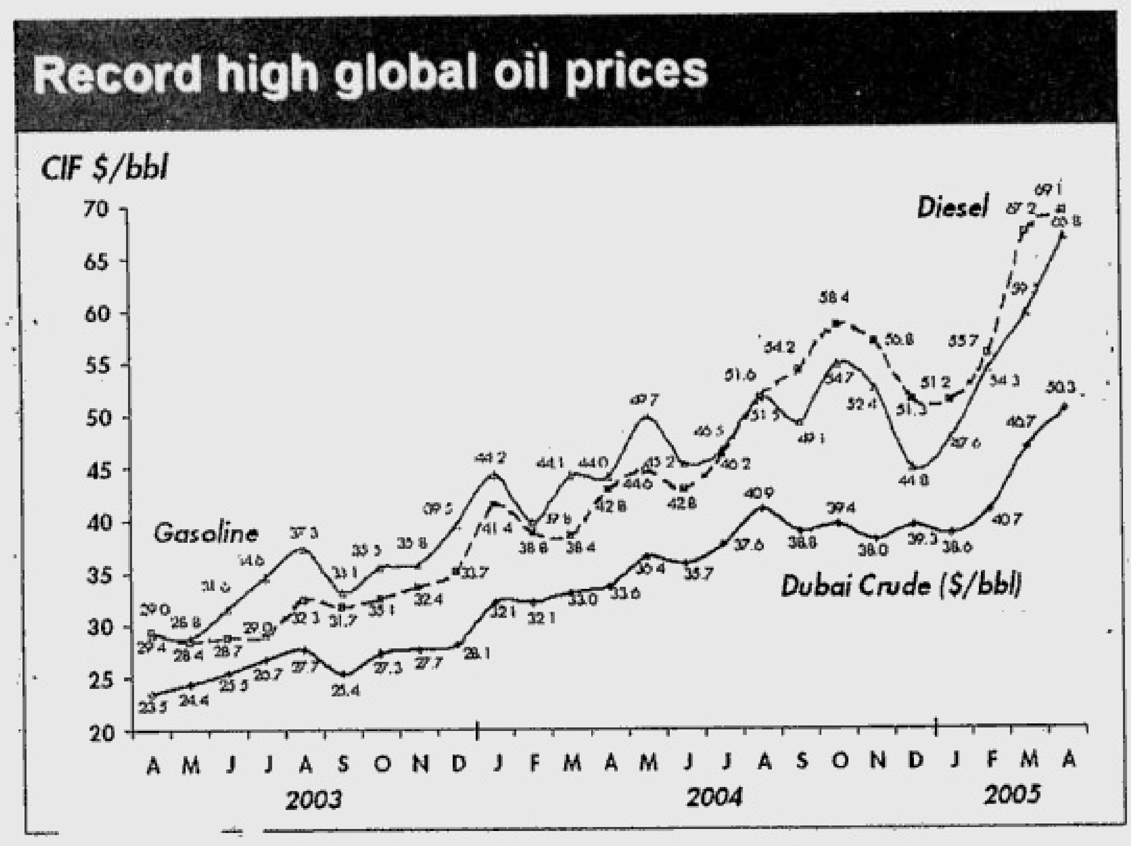
Small numbers of US special forces train troops on a regular basis as part of President George W. Bush's pledge to assist countries who backed the Washington-led global war on terror. • AFP

SO THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

Since the beginning of this year, so much has been said and written about the series of oil price hikes. Consumer Oil Price Watch (COPW) has been issuing misleading statements and accusing the oil companies of oligopoly, price overcharging and urging the Government to investigate the manner in which petroleum products pump prices are adjusted.

Please allow us to share with you the facts and our views on these issues:

➢ **"Arbitrary and too frequent increases in oil prices"** – The primary cause of increases in local petroleum products prices is not the deregulation of the oil industry but the persistent crude oil and finished product price increases in the world market, which have risen by as much as 30% since the start of the year and more than 100% since the start of 2003. All the countries in the world are reeling from the effects of continuing increase in prices.



➢ **"The oil industry is an oligopoly or a cartel as the timing and the amount of increases evidences this"** – the simple reason behind close timing of increases and very similar amounts is because the market is very competitive and the consumers are very price sensitive. If there is a 30 or 50-centavo price difference between service stations, motorists will flock to the station that gives them a cheaper price. This is also true for commercial accounts (large companies consuming petroleum products). Therefore, oil companies ensure that their prices are very competitive and that they adjust their prices quickly in line with the market movement. Dealers and customers (as well as media) normally advise oil companies if there is a competing oil player that has announced an adjustment in prices.

The final proof of the non-existence of an oligopoly or cartel is the financial performance of the oil companies. If there is a cartel or oligopoly, every oil company will be making money and will have attractive returns on their investment. A check with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) will show that the major oil companies have suffered losses in various periods of time and although profits were also generated, the investments are very large (about P 50bln for Shell) such that the Return on Rate Base (RORB) ranges only from 3-4%. How can this be a cartel/oligopoly then?

➢ **"Petron and Shell have refineries so they should not price their products the same as importers. They are overcharging the market."** - A refinery is a separate investment from depots and gas stations, which requires a fair return to ensure continued investment and operation. At the moment, the refining business is not attractive in the country. Proof of this is the closure in Oct of 2003 of a refinery in Batangas. Another proof is the absence of any investment in a refinery by any new oil player in the market despite the fact that local refineries can only supply 50% of the market's requirements so 50% of finished products are already imported. New players have only invested in storage facilities and gas stations.

So how can Petron and Shell price their products lower when their refineries are already not giving sufficient and appropriate return on investments? It is also like saying that it is OK to pay refineries outside the country a higher price and make them profitable but it is not OK to pay the same price to local companies and make their refineries profitable as well!

On the basis of the above clarifications, Shell is therefore of the view that ***the manner of local oil price setting is not arbitrary and that the adjustments are not unjustified***, as it is primarily driven by global factors and movements in the exchange rate.

Shell welcomes the recent announcement by the Department of Energy (DOE) to review the Oil Deregulation Law and the various hearings conducted by the Senate and the House of Representatives on oil pricing. We believe these are relevant fora to discuss and clarify the issues and concerns about the oil industry, not the ad hoc press conferences organized by consumer advocate groups, which have inadequate information and insufficient understanding of the oil industry.

Tests show Miriam did not suffer mild stroke

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE FEISTY Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago did not suffer a "minor stroke" on Friday contrary to what was believed, according to her physician Dr. Esperanza Cabral.

"She's perfectly all right, [she's] strong as a bull," the senator's husband Narciso "Jun" Santiago Jr., presidential adviser on revenue enhancement, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

He said the senator returned home from a checkup at the Philippine Heart Center at 6 p.m. yesterday and was feeling better.

She was not confined but underwent a series of tests at the PHC between Friday and yesterday, according to Dennis Legaspi, the senator's public relations officer.

Marilou Jiao, Santiago's longtime friend and social director, said the senator had felt a numbness in her body on Friday.

"When she woke up, she felt a numbness on her right side," Jiao said, adding that the senator's blood pressure had also shot up.

Santiago called Cabral of the PHC, who immediately ordered an electrocardiogram and other tests.

Jiao said the senator had suffered a "transient ischemic attack" or a mild stroke.

But Cabral said a carotid doplar scan came out negative. "She had no blockage," the doctor said.

Cabral said the senator also underwent a CT scan which showed a normal result.

Cabral said the numbness may have been caused by a bad sleeping position.

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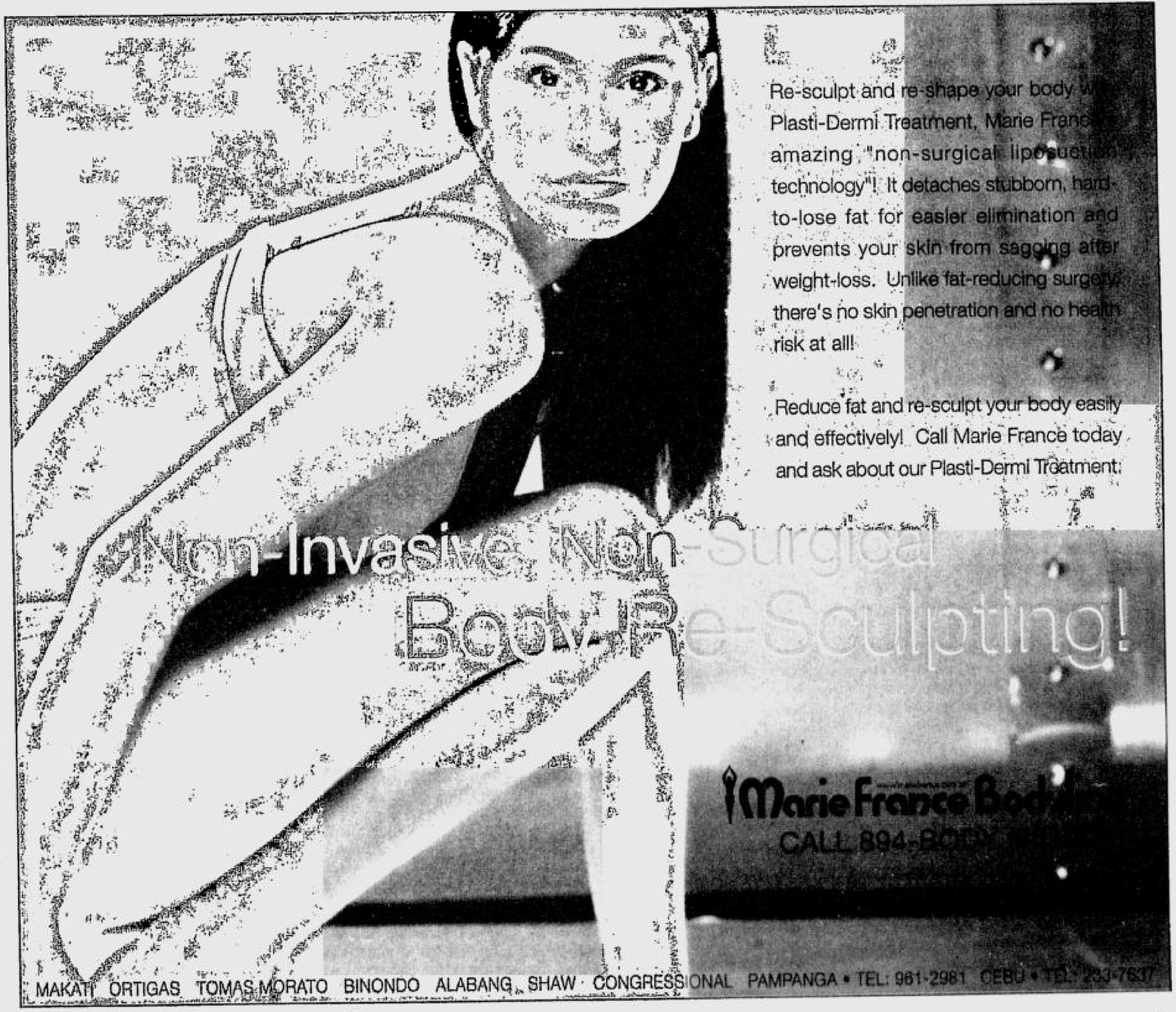

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Key witness vs Laoag mayor recants

By Armand N. Nocum

THE CHIEF witness in the killing of Laoag City Vice Mayor Jimmy Chua has recanted his earlier statements implicating Laoag City Mayor Michael Fariñas as the assailant.

During a preliminary investigation at the Department of Justice yesterday, Laoag Councilor Melvin M. de la Cuesta filed a fifth affidavit accusing National Bureau of Investigation agents of pressuring him to tag Fariñas as the killer.

In his fourth affidavit which NBI agents had helped him draft, De la Cuesta said it was the mayor who had "accidentally" shot Chua while they were drinking at the Eagle's Nest Restaurant in Laoag City on Feb. 2 this year.

In three other statements issued right after the killing, De la Cuesta had said that two armed men—one of them a certain Steve—had shot Chua outside the restaurant.

The armed men reportedly sped off on a motorcycle.

But in his fourth affidavit signed on Feb. 24, De la Cuesta said the killing took place inside the restaurant. He also said the mayor had the propensity to point his gun at people when he was drunk.

In his latest affidavit yesterday, De la Cuesta said the NBI had "pressured" him into signing the fourth affidavit, promising not to include him as a respondent in the homicide case to be filed against Fariñas and Sr. Supt. Joel Pagdilao, who was also at the restaurant when the shooting occurred.

"The NBI said they would not include me in the homicide case if I implicated Fariñas as the killer of Vice Mayor Chua," De la Cuesta said, adding that the NBI also promised to pay for the transfer of his family to a foreign country for their safety.

Yesterday, De la Cuesta opted to swear only to the veracity of his fifth affidavit, but not to his four previous statements.

He also admitted that he had been receiving death threats since the killing.

Based on this development, Fariñas' lawyer Jay Flaminiano asked the DOJ to "dismiss the case outright if there is no witness."

Senate panel remains split; VAT bicam placed on hold

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

A DISAGREEMENT among senators led to the indefinite suspension of the bicameral conference committee on the value-added tax yesterday.

It was learned that four of the nine senators sitting in the bicam—just one vote short of a majority—were sticking to the Senate version retaining the VAT rate at 10 percent, causing a deadlock.

Senators Joker Arroyo, Manuel Villar, Jamby Madrigal and Sergio Osmeña III told reporters they were sticking to the Senate version of a 10-percent VAT.

Anticipating the deadlock, Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee and the Senate bicam panel, practically called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to intervene and convince her allies in the Senate to vote for a 12-percent VAT.

"I don't expect a bicam tomorrow but [would] allow for political consolidation, to let the President work on the Senate members to get 12 (percent) and to explain to them that she needs more than the P60 (billion), that she is more interested in P100-P200 billion. The political consolidation should take place right now," Recto said.

Quoting Department of Finance figures, Recto said a 10-percent VAT with exemptions lifted would generate P94 billion, the proposed 11-percent compromise with the House version would raise P124 billion, and a 12-percent VAT, which the House voted for, would earn P156 billion.

Recto presented four options for consideration by the senators: Their original position of 10 percent with exemptions lifted; 11 percent; 12 percent; or 10 percent but giving President Arroyo power to increase the rate to 12 percent.

Recto's counterpart in the House, Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, expressed exasperation at the "Senate intramurals" and moved for the adjournment of the bicam until the Senate panel got its act together.

"They have different positions, they are not united. It's a Senate intramural problem. There's a lot of ego and *amor propio*," Lapus said. Lapus said the 25-member House bicam panel was sticking to its 12-percent recommendation.

Recto said three separate caucuses would be held today by the Senate panel to include the other senators who are not bicam members.

"We adjourned today and we agreed that we will meet in a caucus to refine our position," said Sen. Edgardo Angara, a member of the bicam.

Voting in the bicam is held separately by the Senate and House panels.

The Senate panel is composed of administration Senators Recto, Arroyo, Villar, Richard Gordon and Rodolfo Biazon and opposition Senators Angara, Osmeña, Madrigal and Juan Ponce Enrile.

"It's a close call but I think 'no' (against 12 percent) will win," Arroyo said.

Arroyo, Villar, Osmeña and Madrigal said they would stick by 10 percent.

"There's nothing to refine," Arroyo added.

"Anything higher than 10 percent is antipoor," Madrigal said yesterday.

A senator said Madrigal had been getting calls from the President asking her to support a 12-percent VAT.

"Even her relatives are receiving calls from Malacañang," the senator, who did not want to be named, said.

Of the other five senators, Biazon said he was open to 12 percent. Enrile said he would vote according to "what is good for the people," and Angara said he still wanted to hear the justifications for hiking the VAT to 12 percent.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: CIRCULAR NO. 471 (RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING OPERATIONS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE DEALERS, MONEY CHANGERS AND REMITTANCE AGENTS)

Who should register

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), in Circular No. 471 issued on 24 January 2005, requires all entities and persons engaged or desiring to engage in business of buying and selling foreign currencies and in the remittance, transfer or transmittal of money on behalf of any person or entity, to register with the BSP.

1) Existing Foreign Exchange Dealers (FXDs) Money Changers (MCs) and Remittance Agents (RAs) operating as of 17 February 2005 should apply within 90 days from said date.

2) New FXDs/MCs and RAs should register before starting operation.

Requirements for registration

1) Letter of application;
2) Incorporation papers duly authenticated by the Securities and Exchange Commission (*for corporation/partnership*); or copy of the Certificate of Registration duly authenticated by the Department of Trade and Industry (*for single proprietorship*);
3) Copy of business license/permit from the city or municipality where the business is located and operates;
4) List of stockholders/partners/proprietor/directors/principal officers as the case may be;
5) Notarized Deed of Undertaking to strictly comply with the requirements of all relevant laws, rules and regulations, signed either by the owner, partner, president or officer of equivalent rank;
6) Two (2) copies passport size pictures of the proprietor or the officers duly authorized by the Board of Directors or Partners; and
7) Xerox copies of two (2) valid IDs with picture and signature of the proprietor or the officers duly authorized by the Board of Directors or Partners.

Where to obtain the pertinent BSP forms

The *Letter of Application* and *Deed of Undertaking* forms are available at the Supervision and Examination Department III (SED III) at the BSP Main Office, Malate, Manila, and in all BSP regional offices and branches all over the country. Forms can also be downloaded from the BSP website www@bsp.gov.ph.

Processing Fee

Each new and existing FXD, MC or RA shall be charged a processing fee of P1,000.00. Payment shall be made at the BSP Cash Department, BSP Main Office, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (except holidays), upon presentation of an Order of Payment issued by SED III.

Where and when to register

Application for registration may be filed Monday to Friday (except holidays) in any of the following BSP offices:

BSP Office	Address	Telephone No.
Supervision and Examination Dept. III, BSP Main Office	Multi-storey Bldg. Lobby (enter Gate 3)	523-24-55; 536-60-71
Cebu Regional Office	Cor. Osmeña Blvd. & P. del Rosario Sts., Cebu City	(032) 254-09-73; 254-14-50
La Union Regional Office	Quezon Ave., San Fernando, La Union	(072) 888-2083; 888-27-36
Davao Regional Office	Quirino Ave., Davao City	(082) 227-90-51; 227-19-03
Angeles Branch	Sto. Entierro St., Angeles City	(045) 888-58-58; 888-47-47
Batac Branch	National Highway, Quiling Norte Batac, Ilocos Norte	(077) 792-21-01; 792-21-03
Bacolod Branch	Lacson cor. Luzuriaga Sts., Bacolod City	(034) 433-31-78; 435-46-23
Cabanatuan Branch	Cor. Del Pilar Paco Roman Sts., Cabanatuan City	(044) 436-17-36; 463-17-34
Cagayan de Oro Branch	National Highway cor. Velez St., Cagayan de Oro City	(088) 856-44-26; 857-41-72
Dagupan Branch	Tondaligan, Bonoan Guesset, Dagupan City	(075) 614-30-26; 614-30-27
Dumaguete Branch	July Dev. Corp. Bldg., V. Lacson & Cervantes Sts. Dumaguete City	(035) 225-44-26; 225-34-64
General Santos Branch	Pendatun cor. Daprosa St., Gen. Santos City	(083) 552-23-11
Iloilo Branch	BSP Bldg., Solis St., Iloilo City	(033) 335-11-80; 337-66-35
Kalibo Branch	RSL Bldg., Arch Reyes & G. Pastrana Sts. Kalibo Aklan	(036) 262-55-78; 262-70-30
Legazpi Branch	Del Rosario Bldg. II, Rizal Ave., Legaspi City	(052) 480-57-35; 480-55-14
Lucena Branch	Quezon Ave., Lucena City	(042) 373-73-23; 710-31-75
Naga Branch	Chua Oco Bldg. Elias Angela St., Naga City	(054) 811-10-59; 811-24-72
Ozamis Branch	Circumferential Road, Ozamiz City	(088) 521-02-63
Tacloban Branch	Uytingco Bldg. Sen. Enaje St., Tacloban City	(053) 325-51-34; 321-33-18
Tuguegarao Branch	Cor. Mabini & Gonzaga Sts., Tuguegarao, Cagayan	(078) 844-10-75; 844-20-43
Zamboanga Branch	LHB Bldg. I, Veteranos Ave., Zamboanga City	(062) 991-21-51

Existing FXDs/MCs or RAs (i.e., those operating as of 17 February 2005) have until May 17, 2005 to register.

Training/Seminar requirement

Prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Registration, the officers and the personnel directly involved in foreign exchange operations are required to attend a seminar on the requirements of the *Anti-Money Laundering Law*. Seminars are held every Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at the 18th Floor, Multi-Storey Building, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Mabini St., Malate Manila.

Sanctions

An existing FXD, MC or RA found operating without BSP application for registration after 17 May 2005 shall be subject to applicable penalties under Section 36 of RA No. 7653 (The New Central Bank Act), i.e., fine not less than P50,000.00 nor more than P200,000.00 or by imprisonment of not less than two years not more than 10 years, or both, at the discretion of the court.

Contact persons and telephone numbers

For further details, please contact the following:

SED III

Ms. Teresita V. Romero
Tel: 524-70-11 to 51 (trunk line)
local 2613 and 2614

Mr. Nicanor F. Rillera
Tel: 524-70-11 to 51 (trunk line)
local 2688; 525-61-45 (direct line)

Atty. Conrado A. Reyno
Tel: 524-70-11 to 51 (trunk line)
local 2512; 536-60-71 (direct line)

Sandiganbayan asks PNP to comment on Estrada security

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN yesterday gave the Philippine National Police until Wednesday to comment on the motion of deposed President Joseph Estrada seeking permission to attend his mother's 100th birthday celebration at the Manila Hotel on May 2.

The antigraft court's move came after government prosecutors posed no objection to the motion filed by Estrada through his lawyer Rene Saguisag.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio, however, said the prosecution would wait for the official position of the PNP on the matter.

"We won't oppose the defense panel's motion but we would like to hear [from] the PNP regarding the security arrangements for the former president," Villa-Ignacio said.

For his part, Deputy Director General Avelino Razon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said his men could secure Estrada if the Sandiganbayan decides to let him attend his mother's party.

Razon said around 300 cops, closely coordinating with the PNP-Police Security and Protection Office, would see to it that Estrada is safely ferried to the Manila Hotel and back to his detention at his villa in Tanay, Rizal.

Razon also said the PNP would be fielding up to 12,500 policemen on May 1, Labor Day, and the day after.

Three big groups composed of laborers, public transport drivers and the political opposition are expected to conduct protest actions during the two days.

Four years ago on May 1, the opposition tried to unseat President Macapagal-Arroyo who had assumed the presidency from Estrada four months before. That day is popularly referred to as "Edsa 3" or the "May 1 Siege."

As in previous protest actions, the police would exercise "maximum tolerance," Razon said.

Meanwhile, Estrada's lawyer Jose Flaminiano said they are studying the possibility of filing a motion for bail for the former president. He, however, refused to elaborate but noted that Estrada had repeatedly demonstrated that he was not a flight risk.

Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo said they would oppose any motion seeking bail for Estrada. He said the evidence of guilt against him was strong and the offense with which he is charged is punishable with death. *With Luige A. del Puerto and Regan Tan*

Who owns hotel casino? Jinggoy seeks inquiry

By TJ Burgonio

OPPOSITION Sen. Jinggoy Estrada yesterday sought a Senate inquiry into the ownership of the Hyatt Marina Hotel in Malate, Manila, amid suspicions that controversial Macao gambling mogul Stanley Ho has a stake in it.

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. operates a casino in the hotel.

In a privilege speech, Estrada said Marina Square Properties owns the land the Hyatt stands on and is a subsidiary of the Chow Tai Fook Group of Companies of Hong Kong.

The Chow Tai Fook Group is controlled principally by Henry Cheng, who owns the New World Hotel and is an "old partner" of Ho's, Estrada said, citing the contract between Pagcor and the Hyatt Marina Hotel.

The senator claimed Marina Square Properties acquired the land from Fairmont Holdings, which is chaired by Ho.

"That is why I ask that the Senate also investigate the true ownership of Marina Square Properties so that we may know if, in fact, Mr. Stanley Ho has taken a big chunk of casino operations in the Philippines," Estrada said.

Estrada recalled that Malacañang had "warmly welcomed" Ho when he visited the country in March last year, even sending Dan Rolleda, presidential assistant for foreign investments, to personally meet him.

"On top of this gracious welcome, Mr. Stanley Ho was conferred an honorary doctorate degree by the Angeles University Foundation in Ms Arroyo's home province, which prompted Archbishop Cruz to return his honorary doctorate degree to the same university in protest," he said.

Estrada also sought an inquiry into the allegedly anomalous lease contract between Marina Square Properties and Pagcor to operate the casino in the Hyatt Marina Hotel.

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Aging population in Asia-Pacific to reach 1.2B in 2050, says UN

THE NUMBER of people aged 60 and over in Asia-Pacific is expected to hit 1.2 billion—a quarter of the region's population—by 2050, putting the pressure on governments to boost social welfare programs and minimize effects on their economies, the United Nations said in a survey released in Manila yesterday.

"The severity and complexity of such challenges will depend on the stage of economic development, the stage of aging and the level of preparedness," the U.N.'s Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific said in its 2005 report.

China, too

China, the world's most populous nation with nearly 1.3 billion people, is among the countries with the most rapidly aging population, together with South Korea, Sri Lanka, and Kazakhstan, it said.

Developed economies whose populations gray at a rapid rate—meaning the number of people over 60 years will be greater than 25 percent of the population by 2050—include Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

Moderate rate

India, the world's second most populated nation, is aging at a moderate rate, with people 60 years and above expected to make up 20 percent to 25 percent of the total population by 2050. Aging in Malaysia, North Korea, Myanmar, Indonesia, Vietnam, Brunei, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan also is taking place at a moderate speed, the report said.

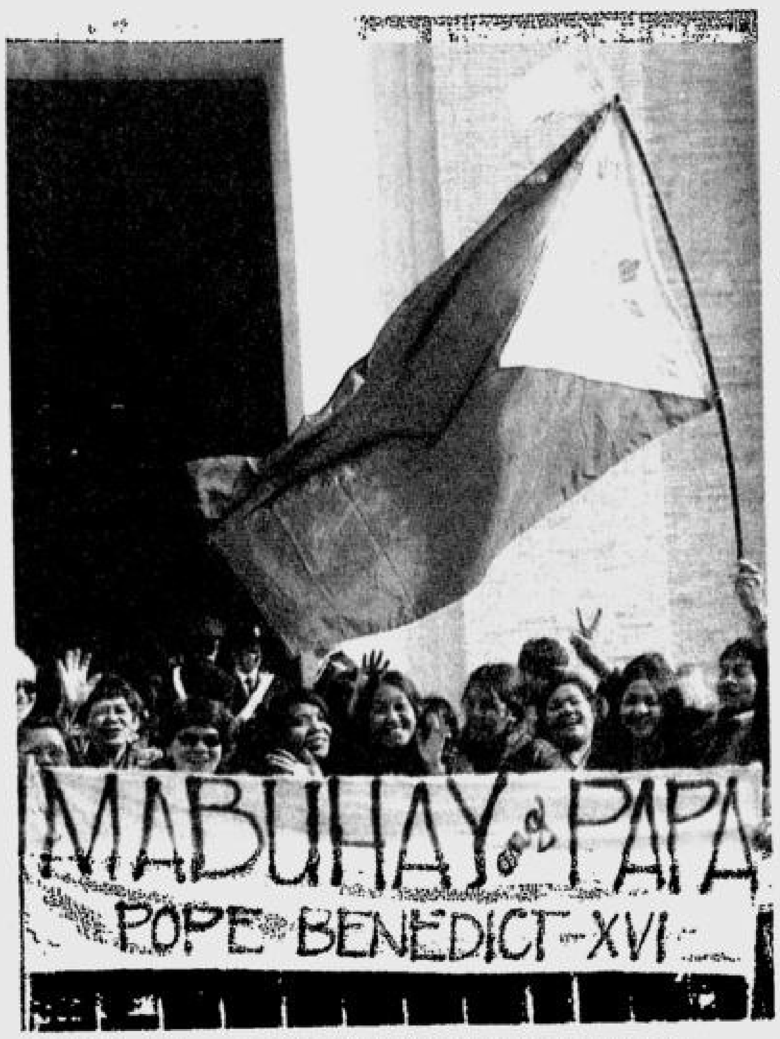
In Asia-Pacific countries with rapidly aging populations, the number of elderly women outpace men, and the share of people aged 80 and over is seen rising from 51.7 percent of the world's total in 2000 to 61.5 percent by 2050.

Pension schemes

The survey urged countries to prepare by making productive use of young labor forces and reforming pension schemes.

Pension reforms should include increasing privately managed and funded contribution schemes for savings and retirement, increasing the retirement age and removing incentives for early retirement, and using health insurance to finance health care needs of the elderly, the report said.

Agreements to supply labor between nations also could help reduce unemployment in some countries while meeting labor shortages in others, the report said. *AP*



FILIPINO pilgrims wave the Philippine flag and hold up banner "Mabuhay and Papa" during the installation Mass of Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Sunday. AP

Pope happy for RP, says Noli

POPE Benedict XVI has expressed happiness for the Filipinos' role in leading Roman Catholicism in Asia, during a meeting with Vice President Noli de Castro at the Vatican on Sunday.

"I am happy that the Philippines remains the bastion of Catholicism in Asia and I am glad that Filipinos remain strong and firm in their faith in the Roman Catholic church," the vice president said quoting the Pope.

De Castro headed the Philippine delegation for the Pope's investiture at the Vatican City. He asked the Holy Father to "pray for the Philippines" and "strength for the Filipino family" during difficult times.

De Castro was received by the Pontiff before he officiated his first Mass at the St. Peter Square on Sunday morning.

De Castro described his meeting with the Pope as "very touching, encouraging and a humbling experience." With him were Philippine Ambassador to the Holy See Leonida Vera, Philippine Ambassador to Italy Philip Lhullier and De Castro's daughter, Catherine.

Earlier, De Castro met with Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, Jose Cardinal Sanchez and other leaders of the Filipino community in Rome where he conveyed the message of President Macapagal-Arroyo to Pope Benedict XVI, through the Vatican's secretary of state.

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Doc's killing another . . .

From page A1

Seeing the man slumped in the Lancer and his face covered with blood, Abalos pulled him out, fumbled for the man's identification card and was shocked: it was the surgeon Echiverri, his own son-in-law.

Echiverri, 43, died from four bullet wounds in the chest—the third high-profile killing to occur in Metro Manila in the last two weeks.

"I was stunned. I didn't know the man I had pulled out of the car was the husband of my daughter," said Abalos, a former Mandaluyong City councilor.

Hours after the 7:45 a.m. ambush on San Rafael Street, Barangay Plainview in Mandaluyong, police said they had arrested one of the suspected assassins.

Motive unknown

"He was positively identified by a witness as one of the gunmen," National Capital Region Police Office Director Avelino Razon Jr. told the INQUIRER.

Police also recovered the tricycle the killers had grabbed to flee the murder scene.

The motive for the assassination was not immediately clear.

The killing of Echiverri was the second successive tragedy to hit the Abalos clan, which is mourning the death of Rep. Benhur Abalos' eldest daughter from multiple organ failure last week.

Assassins wait

A storeowner near the crime scene [name withheld by the INQUIRER] said that, before the shooting, she saw two men standing in front of her store. Another man stood in front of a bakery just across the street.

The three looked as if they were waiting for someone, she said.

"I was mopping the floor when gunshots rang out. I looked across the street and saw the man there pull out his handgun," she said.

Then she saw three men firing at the maroon car.

Gunmen warn witnesses

"Don't meddle here, don't meddle here," she heard one of the gunmen shout at the neighborhood.

Echiverri tried to drive off but his car stopped after about a hundred meters, investigator PO3 Rico Sta. Maria said.

At least 18 bullets hit the car, most of which were aimed at the driver's side, Sta. Maria added.

Killers walk away

Two bullets entered through the windshield. The window on the driver's side was shattered.

The killers walked a few meters before forcibly taking a tricycle. Another witness said six men jumped in.

Bystanders brought Echiverri to the hospital in a tricycle. But he was already dead.

His wife rushed to the hospital on hearing the news. Along the way, her car accidentally hit a pedestrian.

'Extreme anger'

Police said they were trying to locate the pedestrian upon the request of Echiverri's wife so that the family could render assistance.

The Abalos family was clueless on the motive behind the killing.

The motive might be personal, city police chief Ericson Velasquez said. The victim's wallet and other belongings in his car were intact, he said.

Razon said that two weeks earlier, Echiverri had received a threat on his life and had the incident recorded in the police blotter.

For now, investigators refused to disclose the nature of the threat and where it came from, he said.

Chairman Abalos, still grieving over the death of his granddaughter, said the killing "must be because of extreme anger."

"They needed several men to perpetrate the crime. And the killers made sure he was dead," Abalos said at the wake of Ciara Marie Abalos, 19, who died on Friday night.

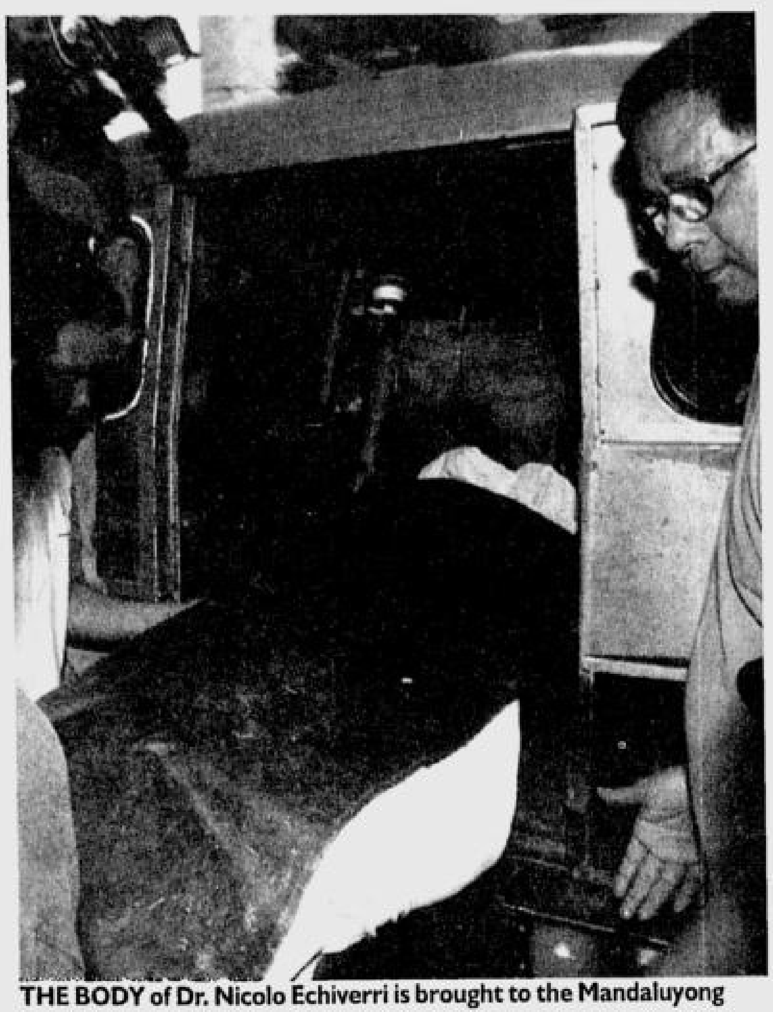
The ambush came a day after suspected robbers broke into the Makati house of Foreign Assistant Secretary Alicia Ramos and strangled her on her bed. *(See story on Page A1.)*

Just last week, an assassin gunned down former Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot inside a Pasig City restaurant.

Both cases remained unsolved.

6 men wanted

"At present, the [police] have one suspect in their custody," Razon said. He did not name the suspect or give any details about his arrest.



THE BODY of Dr. Nicolo Echiverri is brought to the Mandaluyong Medical Center from the scene of the ambush. ERIK ARAZAS

Velasquez said a witness had positively identified the suspect as one of six persons who killed Echiverri.

"Right now, we are confirming his identity and participation with other witnesses," he said.

Velasquez said the police wanted to be very sure that they had the right man before presenting him to the media.

One thing police seemed to be sure about: Razon said Echiverri's killing was not work related.

Echiverri had a private clinic and also worked as a consultant for the Mandaluyong City Medical Center, where he was rushed after he was shot.

High-profile killings revive gun ban drive

By Luige A. del Puerto

AFTER three high-profile killings in Metro Manila in just two weeks, will the government now see the wisdom of enforcing a total gun ban?

Antigun crusader Nandy Pacheco raised the point yesterday as he urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to immediately prohibit the carrying even of licensed firearms in public places.

Pacheco called on Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao to "tell the President to enforce a total gun ban, with no exemptions."

Under such a ban, only soldiers and policemen on duty would be allowed to carry guns in public.

"The President can do this even without legislation," Pacheco said on the phone, shortly after a medical doctor was gunned down in Mandaluyong City.

"The President, in turn, must urge Congress to increase the penalty for illegal possession of a firearm to life imprisonment," said the longtime antigun advocate.

"It would take a multidimensional approach to start a culture of life. It would take all sectors of society to do this," Pacheco said. "But now, this can be immediately done. Why not do this?

"Like I have said, why wait for somebody to get killed before we do this?"

Yesterday, three men ambushed and killed Dr. Nicolo Echiverri, son-in-law of former Mandaluyong City Councilor Dr. Arsenio Abalos.

On Sunday, three housebreakers strangled Foreign Assistant Secretary Alice Reyes in her bedroom in Makati City.

Two weeks ago, former Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot was shot dead while having lunch in a restaurant.

Deputy Director General Avelino Razon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, insisted the metropolis was safe.

How safe?

"Very safe," Razon said, stressing that the occurrence of crimes should not be blamed on the police.

Neither would it be a doctor's fault if a patient died, he said.

Razon argued that the recent killings were not related and were just three incidents in a metropolis of 12 million residents.

He said police records showed that during the first quarter, the crime rate went down by 21 percent compared to the same period last year.

4 laborers probed on Ramos slay

From page A1

ters on Sunday morning, tied them up, taped the mouth of Alicia and shrouded her face with a towel, Razon said.

"She wasn't strangled. She died of suffocation," Razon said.

No forced entry

He quoted doctors as saying that they had found "a levitation on her left cheek."

"Apparently they pressed her face into the pillow," Razon said.

Investigators also saw no signs of forcible entry into the Ramos home. "No lock was destroyed, no door was forcibly opened," Razon said.

The killers took a bag, the contents of which had not yet been determined. But they apparently did not take any other valuable items from the house, the police official said.

Razon said fingerprints had been lifted from the crime scene and that Ramos' fingernails had also been scraped for samples, in case she had fought her attackers.

High-profile killings

The DNA of any suspect police might arrest later could be compared to what was taken from her fingernails, Razon said.

Ramos' younger sister, Leticia, was able to escape from the house and call police for help.

Razon said the high-profile killings in Metro Manila during the last two weeks had been distinct and not related to each other.

He said the killing of former Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot, for one, was "politically motivated."

"The (shooting of Dr. Nicolo) Echiverri has its own motive," he said, referring to the fatal ambush of Echiverri in Mandaluyong City yesterday.

"The Makati incident was a robbery case," Razon said.

Police, however, have not discounted other angles in the former congressman's murder.

'Still in shock'

Razon clarified that no politician had been linked to the Lanot murder and that there was no need to invite anyone, at this time, for questioning to shed light on the assassination.

The 61-year-old Leticia Ramos has yet to be interviewed by investigators who hope to rely on her first-hand account to learn more about what happened in the house.

"She is still in shock. But she will be invited for questioning because she is the one who could tell us what really happened. She is our principal witness," said Chief Supt. Wilfredo Garcia, Southern Police District director.

Dash to the hospital

Leticia reported the incident to police roughly two hours after three hooded men entered the house just as she opened the front door at around 5:30 a.m. on Sunday.

Leticia was the first to be hogtied and gagged, after which the robbers killed her sister.

After fleeing from the house, Leticia ran to the St. Clare's Medical Center, a few meters from the Ramos residence.

Juvy Desabille, the hospital's admitting clerk who was on duty at the time, said a visibly shocked and distraught Leticia came rushing to the hospital on foot at around 7:20 a.m. on Sunday.

She still had packaging tape stuck to her neck, said Desabille.

Leticia, Desabille said, then used the hospital phone to report the burglary. Still shaken, she then ran to the police detachment another few meters away to seek help.

Ten minutes later, Leticia, assisted by police, returned to the house only to find that her elder sister was dead.

Police still have to determine what the robbers took from the Ramos residence.

Describing the crime scene, PO2 Reuel Riodique, case investigator, said that a few drawers and a shoulder bag in the slain diplomat's room were found open.

Pieces of evidence

Garcia said the police district's Scene-of-the-Crime Operatives (Soco) had already begun processing physical evidence they retrieved from the room.

The evidence included the masking tape that was wrapped around Leticia's face, the cloth used to gag the slain Ramos, and pieces of paper strewn on the floor of the latter's bedroom.

These pieces of evidence will be subjected to nyhydrine testing and superglue examination, laboratory tests that would reveal fingerprints possibly left by the robbers.

Garcia said results of these forensic tests might come in two days.

Riodique said he hoped to get statements from a househelp who was known to have occasionally dropped by the Ramos residence to run errands, and a DFA driver who drove for the Ramos sisters.

Behind shut doors at the Loyola Memorial Chapels in Guadalupe, Makati City, relatives, friends and colleagues of Ramos quietly wept and grieved.

There, relatives and their closest co-workers gathered for a private wake.

"The family requested to have privacy ... we have to respect that," DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque told the INQUIRER.

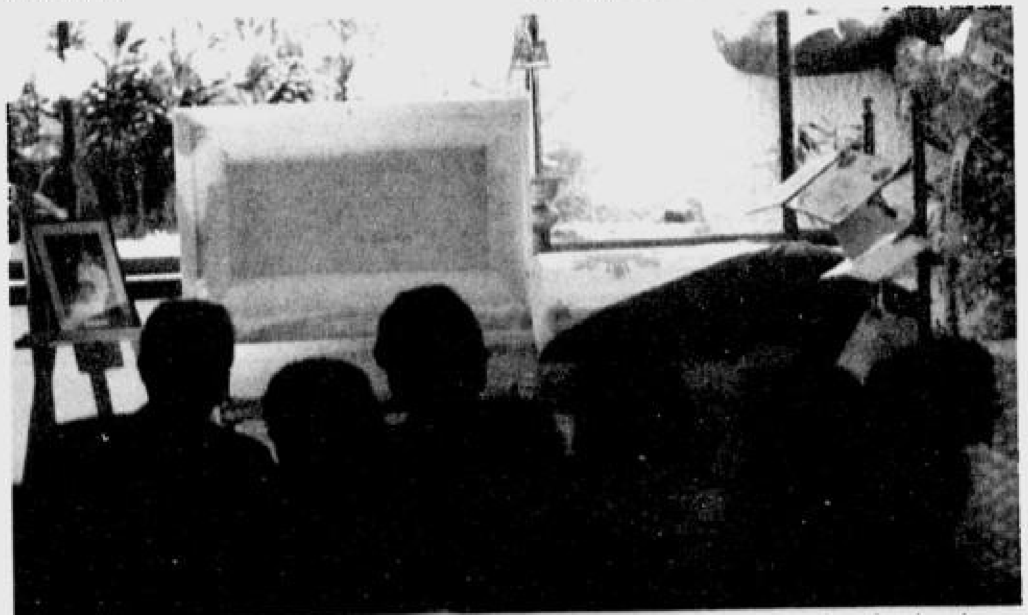
Ramos' remains were placed in the Premiere 2 Chapel, one of the biggest of Loyola's 18 chapels, located on the third floor.

Reporters were barred from going up to the chapel.

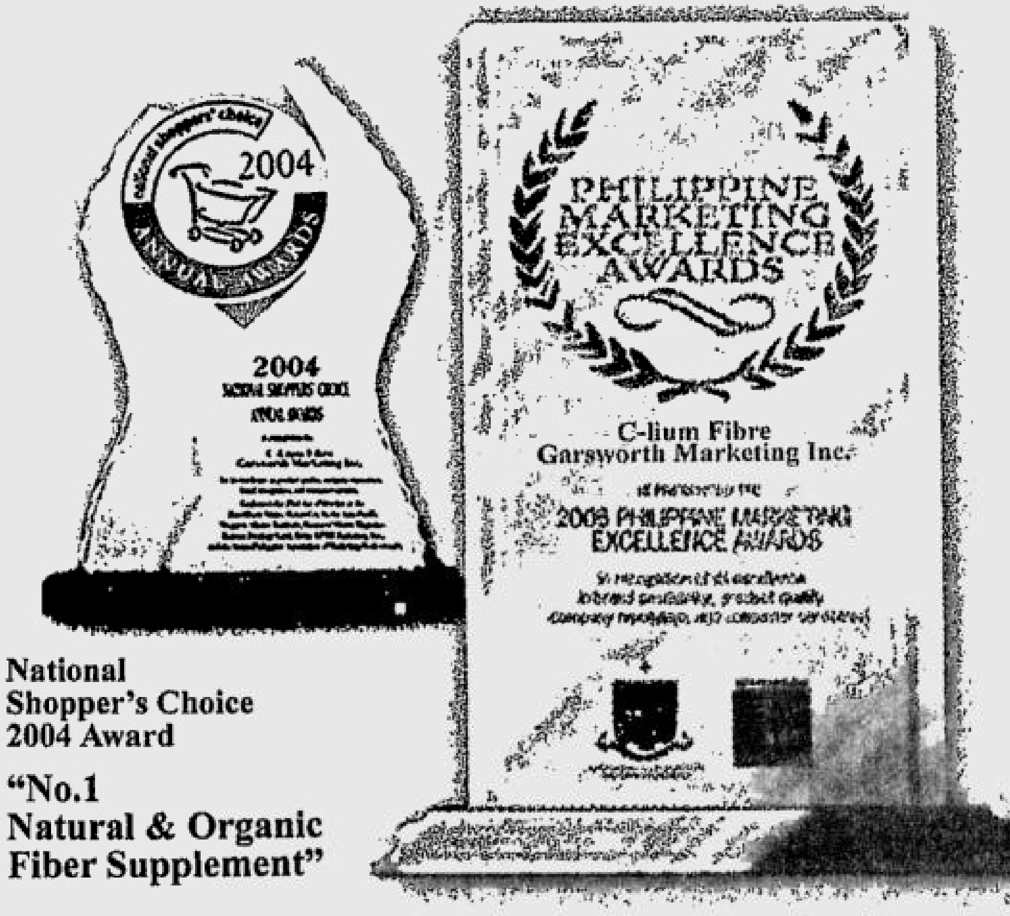
Security personnel were told to let in only Ramos' relatives and friends, including officials and employees of the DFA.

Fresh from an official trip abroad, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo came to Loyola at 2 p.m. to pay his respects to Ramos, who had spent more than 30 years in the diplomatic service.

Ramos, 64, will be buried on Thursday in Rosario, Cavite, alongside her parents, according to the DFA.



RELATIVES and friends of Assistant Foreign Secretary Alicia Ramos mourn her death at her wake at the Loyola Memorial Chapels in Guadalupe, Makati City. REM ZAMORA



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Top activist leaders now targets

From page A1

"[Palparan] one time said that members of the New People's Army are not the ones behind the communist movement. He said NPA rebels were just farmers and they know nothing," Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño said at a recent public forum at the University of the Philippines in Quezon City.

"He said the real leaders behind the revolution are the ones in the militant organizations, those who organize rallies. A few weeks after he said that Attorney (Felidito Dacut) was killed," Casiño said.

Ambush

Dacut, the coordinator of the party-list group Bayan Muna in Eastern Visayas, was a human rights lawyer and active member of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines in Leyte. He was ambushed on March 14 in Tacloban City.

"Friends are saying that [Dacut] survived martial law while taking on the cases of human rights victims, only to be felled by bullets under this administration," said Marie Hilao-Enriquez, secretary general of Karapatan and herself a victim of human rights violations during the martial law regime under Ferdinand Marcos.

Investigation showed that Dacut had just come from a meeting of Bayan Muna and was on his way to buy milk for his child when he was shot in the back by motorcycle-riding gunmen.

"[The military is] now getting bolder. They are now targeting regional leaders," Casiño said, expressing the fear that national leaders of groups critical of the government would soon be the quarry of "special operations teams."

'Enemies of the state'

Fr. Calvin Bugho, a Franciscan missionary assigned in Samar, said a crackdown on groups critical of the government and perceived to be "enemies of the state" was ongoing in the region.

"When General Palparan assumed his post in Eastern Visayas, he promised to clear the area of rebels, criminals and [demonstrators] as he did in Mindoro. This time, he started by killing the lawyer who would defend the people when their rights are violated," Bugho said.

Dacut was not the last Bayan Muna officer to be killed in Eastern Visayas. The Bayan Muna municipal coordinator in Mahaplag, Leyte, was killed on April 15.

Investigation showed that Alfredo Davis and his wife were about to board a vehicle when one of the suspects fired at them. Davis died. His wife was hit in both hands.

Like the killers of Dacut, the man who shot the Davis couple was riding a motorcycle.

Supporters of Luisita workers

Karapatan and progressive party-list groups said the assassination of activists—now at an average of five a month—was not confined to either Southern Tagalog or Eastern Visayas.

Tarlac City Councilor Abelardo Ladera, who was elected in 2004 under Bayan Muna, was killed on March 3 less than a kilometer from the headquarters of the military's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) in Tarlac. He was shot in the head.

Ladera was a staunch supporter of striking farm workers in Hacienda Luisita and a convenor of the Kapitbisig campaign supporting the families of the victims of the Luisita "massacre" of Nov. 17, 2004. Seven workers and their supporters died when the military and police stormed their picket line.

In a briefing paper prepared by Nolcom, Ladera was identified as a communist sympathizer. His sister, Angie, was tagged as an NPA member.

The document said the Laderas were close relatives of Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio Rosal.

Priest

Another sympathizer of the Luisita strikers, Fr. William Tadena of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, was also gunned down on March 13. He had just finished celebrating Mass at a barangay chapel in La Paz town when he was shot by still unidentified assailants.

The deaths of sympathizers of striking workers at the hacienda had prompted the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines to ask the government to identify the perpetrators of what Karapatan and militant groups believe were political killings connected to the ongoing labor strife in Tarlac.

No one brought to justice

Another people's organization said that while military and police officials were being implicated in the killings, "not one has been brought to justice."

"The most notorious has even been promoted," said the group Plaridel, referring to Palparan.

Plaridel said "official military documents tagging militant organizations as a 'national security problem' further bolster suspicions that there is an official policy for the use of summary execution ... on political activists."

The killings were happening even in places like Bulacan, Tarlac and Pampanga, according to Karapatan.

Attempts on Capulong's life

Both Casiño and Enriquez took note of the close calls lawyer Romeo Capulong experienced with persons supposedly out to kill him right in Metro Manila.

"There had been attempts on his life three times already," Enriquez said.

Bayan Muna has acknowledged the ongoing crackdown on its members and those belonging to allied party-list group Anakpawis and militant people's organizations.

"When Marlene Esperat was killed, the President immediately came to her wake. She then ordered law enforcement agencies to quickly solve her murder," Casiño said. [Esperat, a journalist, was gunned down on March 24 in her home in Tacurong City in Sultan Kudarat for exposing corruption at the Department of Agriculture.]

"In contrast, she [the President] has yet to visit a family of a slain leader of progressive party-list and militant organizations. Government officials like Mindoro [Naujan town] Vice Mayor Juvy Magsino (in 2004) and Councilor Ladera have been killed. And yet, she didn't condole with their families," he said.

Expert says patients at mercy of specialists

From page A1

tors specializing in cardiology and pulmonology, very few are left as "general practitioners," according to Dr. Antonio Dans, a diplomate of the Philippine College of Physicians.

As a result, health care has become more costly because patients have to deal with, and pay, so many doctors, Dans said in an interview.

"Let's say you're confined," Dans said, "you can have 10 doctors at a time, each of them working on a specific organ or concern. That would be more costly because you have to pay each specialist."

In many cases, an internist or general practitioner could handle the job because of his "broad knowledge and approach," he said.

"In the first place, why do you need a cardiologist to manage hypertension?" asked Dans, who was a cardiologist for 10 years before shifting to internal or adult medicine five years ago.

There's more. When a patient is managed by different specialists, Dans said coordination was often poor and disintegrated.

Diagnostic possibilities are also limited because specialists understandably are masters only of their areas of specialization, he pointed out.

For instance, he said, a cardiologist examining a person suffering from chest pains would normally suspect a heart problem; a pulmonologist, a lung problem, and a gastroenterologist, heart burn.

An internist, in contrast, would use his broad knowledge to check what ails the patient and, in the process, save him the huge amount he would otherwise pay a specialist, he said.

The United States recognized that they had a crisis when in 1994, only 32 percent of its doctors were generalists and the rest were specialists, according to a five-page paper by Dans proposing health care reform in adult medicine.

"In 1999, only 25 percent of fellows of the Philippine College of Physicians were generalists," Dans wrote. "In fact, there were more cardiologists and pulmonologists in the PCP than there were general internists. And yet this was not recognized as a crisis."

The PCP will tackle the problem during its 35th annual convention on May 3-6 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

But why are internists a dying breed?

"There is the misconception that internists are intellectually inferior to specialists," he said. "The public, including their peers, somehow look down on them, thinking they're 'only' generalists."

There's also the wrong notion that "internists" were similar to medical "interns" who render hospital service as part of the requirements for the board examination, he said.

Thus, "adult medicine" was now being used to help solve internal medicine's identity crisis, he said.

"We really have to educate the public to correct all these misconceptions," Dans said. "How I wish we can relive the days when doctors deal with patients in a holistic way—when what they see is the person, not just the organ."

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Meralco rates up by 22 centavos

From page A1

goods and services.

While the approved Napocor rate increase for Luzon totaled 46.96 centavos per kWh, customers of Meralco will not feel the full impact of the adjustment because the distribution utility gets only about 45 percent of its supply requirements from the state firm.

"Since our (independent power producers or IPPs) have not increased their rates, the impact will be mitigated," Ivanna de la Peña, vice president and utility economics head of Meralco, said in a statement yesterday.

Apart from Napocor, Meralco gets its power supply from the Sta. Rita and San Lorenzo plants of First Gas Power Corp. and from Quezon Power Philippines Ltd.

The ERC gave Napocor on April 22 an additional rate increase of 5 centavos per kWh effective today.

For Napocor customers, the additional charge will be reflected on their May bills. For end-users such as Meralco customers, the impact will be seen on their June bills.

The 5-centavo-per-kWh increase was on top of the 98-centavo-per-kWh provisional rate increase that the ERC gave Napocor in September last year. Meralco reflected this particular increase on its November bills.

Exchange rate adjustment

Aside from this additional rate increase, the ERC approved Napocor's generation rate adjustment mechanism (GRAM) and incremental currency exchange rate adjustment (Icera) applications covering the last quarter of 2004.

The quarterly GRAM allows Napocor to recover cost fluctuations related to fuel and power purchased from IPPs.

The Icera, on the other hand, is a quarterly rate adjustment mechanism that allows Napocor to reflect foreign exchange fluctuations in the rates it charges its customers.

Taking these three ERC-approved rate adjustments into consideration, the increase in Napocor's generation charge in the Luzon grid, within which Meralco operates, comes up to 46.96 centavos per kWh.

History of rate adjustments

When the ERC allowed Napocor to jack up its rates by an average of 98 centavos per kWh in September, the effect on the Luzon grid was placed at P1.23 per kWh.

In June last year, three months before the provisional rate increase was issued, the ERC also approved Napocor's third GRAM filing, which raised its generation charge by 13.67 centavos per kWh.

A month before that, the state firm's Icera filing was also approved, increasing Napocor rates by 7.27 centavos per kWh.

Other additional cost recovery adjustments that the ERC approved for Napocor at around the time the provisional increase was issued were 13.63 centavos per kWh for its deferred accounting adjustment and 1.54 centavos per kWh for imbalance charges.

Total hike: P1.07/kWh

All these rate increases totaled more than P1.59 per kWh. For Meralco, however, since it got only between 55 and 61 percent of its supply from Napocor in May-October 2004, the net effect on its customers' monthly bills beginning in November was P1.07 centavos per kWh.

Also in November, Meralco implemented a 6-centavo-per-kWh reduction in its bills as it reflected the second phase of the law-mandated intra-regional cross-subsidy removal on transmission charges.

Another rate adjustment that took place that month stemmed from the first phase of the removal of inter-class cross-subsidies. This meant higher rates for residential customers and lower rates for commercial and industrial power users.

Because of the removal of the cross-subsidy, residential and general service customers shouldered an increase of 28.52 centavos per kWh, small industrial users a hike of 40.62 centavos per kWh, and government hospitals an adjustment of 43.56 centavos per kWh.

Large nonindustrial and extra-large industrial service customers, on the other hand, enjoyed rate reductions of 27.83 centavos per kWh and 25.22 centavos per kWh, respectively.

Medium nonindustrial service commercial customers got a rate reduction of 23.12 centavos per kWh, small nonindustrial service users a rate decline of 12.66 centavos per KWh, large industrial service consumers a monthly savings of 10.95 centavos per kWh and medium industrial service users a rate markdown of 3.57 centavos per kWh.

By February, Meralco again adjusted its rates by 9.29 centavos per kWh after the ERC approved its final GRAM filing for the latter part of 2004. After this GRAM filing, the ERC ordered a return to the automatic monthly adjustment mechanism, effectively junking the quarterly GRAM.

The following month, Meralco effected a 37.5-centavo-per-kWh reduction in its rates due to the higher dispatch levels of its IPPs.

The next rate adjustment for the Lopez-led firm would come in June, at 21 centavos to 22 centavos per kWh, to reflect the recently approved ERC rate adjustments for Napocor.

Other power distributors

Rates will be different for power distributors that get all their supply requirements from Napocor.

Unlike Meralco, most distribution utilities in the provinces, particularly the electric cooperatives, get all their power from the state firm.

In the Visayas and Mindanao grids, the approved rate adjustments, including Napocor's GRAM and Icera, amount to 12.13 centavos per kWh and 27.98 centavos per kWh, respectively. The country average is placed at 36.25 centavos per kWh.

Based on Napocor computations, households that use up to 50 kWh a month will be paying an additional monthly generation charge of P6.69, while those consuming up to 75 kWh a month will have to shell out an additional P13.04.

Consumers using 100 kWh a month will be paying P21.40, and those consuming 200 kWh will have to shoulder an additional P53.30 a month. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

Court ...

From page A1

tional Economic and Development Authority.

"[The indigenous Filipino community] has big expectations from [Brawner]. He earned a reputation in Baguio for being a very fair regional trial court judge. But being [Ifugao], he is sensitive to the cultural nuances of the indigenous Filipino and that is important for justice in the Philippines," said Kathleen Okubo, a member of the city's Mateo Cariño Foundation, one of the more prominent Ibaloi clans here.

"We would be interested to know [his opinion] on Ipra (Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act) that legitimizes ancestral land titles and which was challenged before the Supreme Court," said an indigenous peoples' rights advocate. The high court threw out the question of Ipra's constitutionality.

Fernando said this was the first *cañao* she had attended and was delighted to learn about the elements of Cordillera justice.

Unifying the tribe

During the *cañao*, a black pig and two chickens were dragged to the center of the gathering to be sacrificed to the gods.

Brawner said the ritual required the sacrifices but added that these animals would be spared upon the intervention of the wives and children of the justices who were present.

Baguio City Rep. Mauricio Domogan explained to the justices that a *cañao* not only unified a tribe, it was a way for everybody to catch up on news about the community.

Domogan wore a G-string bearing the colors of his own Bago tribe and acted as the *cañao* high priest. He blessed the sacrificial animals and then he, too, danced with students of the St. Louis University and the Balsigan troupe.

Ifugao dancing

Brawner and his wife, Leonora Fe, a retired University of the Philippines professor, later joined the dancing.

A few of the justices also participated, but many were content feasting on Baguio vegetables, grilled chicken, pork and calf.

According to Domogan, justice is strong among the Igorot, although few lawyers understand the intricacies of their cultural justice. Various advocates have clamored for the recognition of indigenous judicial practices as contemporary law.

'Bulol' in flight

Glimpses of Cordillera justice also surfaced during the Integrated Bar of the Philippines' 10th National Convention for Lawyers this week.

The convention, which Brawner attended, unveiled a new symbol for justice inspired by the Ifugao *bulol* (a wooden rice granary guardian depicted as a sitting man with an undefined face).

But the two-meter high *bulol* was standing upright, revealing a clear face and breasts. Its arms carried the scales of justice, similar to the image of the Lady of Justice.

Artists Kawayan de Guia and Ferdinand Balanag designed the icon, which they described as an altar to the "bulol in flight."

The *bulol* has always been a "symbol of fertility, prosperity and harvest," but now that it bears the scales of justice, it also promises tribes "an elevation of the economic state" and a "bridging of the old ways of indigenous ethics with today's laws," Balanag said.

2 Pangasinan mayors lauded for fight vs 'jueteng'

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—While Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz feels hurt whenever Pangasinan is mentioned as one of the provinces where "jueteng" is rampant, he now has a reason to be proud as two Pangasinan mayors have been honored for their fight to stamp out the illegal numbers game.

Mayors Gabriel Navarro of Bani and Domingo Doctor of Burgos were cited last week at the annual Parangal Para sa Mararangal of the Krusadang Bayan Laban sa Jueteng (People's Crusade Against Jueteng).

Navarro and Doctor were also cited during last year's awards rites for keeping their towns jueteng-free.

"These are two noble local public officials who have the integrity and the courage to say 'no' to jueteng in their respective [towns]. While there may be still guerrilla jueteng in these places, it remains certain that they are with the crusade in counteracting this corrupt and corrupting gambling in their jurisdictions," Cruz, Krusada chair, said.

Navarro said jueteng financiers or their representatives had stopped bothering him after he declined their offer of a share in their revenues during his first term in 1998.

He gave credit to his father, the late Bani Mayor Marcelo Navarro, for inculcating in him the value of avoiding involvement in illegal activities like jueteng.

"During his term from 1972 to 1995, there was no jueteng in Bani," Navarro said.

Cruz asked Navarro and Doctor to continue their fight against jueteng.

While Pangasinan has "many good people to meet, places to visit and great historical events on record, all these attributes seem to be overshadowed by the repeated reports of jueteng operations [in the province]," the bishop said.

"More than anybody, I am the one who personally feels much pain whenever Pangasinan is [mentioned in media reports] as a jueteng province," he said.

"The reason for this is obvious. I am the chair of the national crusade against jueteng. I [live] in Dagupan City and the crusade was in fact born in Dagupan some three years ago," he added.

Cruz said 101 town mayors, 5 city mayors and 10 governors received the Parangal this year for their fight to stop jueteng.

"The core message of the yearly Parangal is plain and simple: 'Jueteng can be stopped by the mere will of public officials and police authorities.' Or how can it be explained that there were [more than 100] awardees," he said.

Name Big 3 of 'jueteng,' solons urge whistle-blower

From page A1

influencing the assignment of police officials to provinces with huge jueteng payola.

Rumors

Asked to comment on speculation that M1 was First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and M2 was his son, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "We don't engage in rumors."

The young Arroyo refused to comment on whether members of the First Family were the ones alluded to by the whistle-blower.

"I don't think so because I have nothing to do with that. Our names are not being mentioned," he said.

"When I read the INQUIRER, it didn't come across my mind that (he) was referring to us. What was said was that those involved were close to a top government official," the Pampanga representative said.

Come out

He called on the whistle-blower to come out in the open and name names so "we can get to the bottom of this."

Drilon said the allegations of corruption involving close relatives of a high-ranking government official should not be taken lightly.

"We should not forget that the very same charges caused the downfall of a former President. We must not underestimate the Filipino people's continued distaste for public corruption spawned by jueteng operations," he said.

Detained former President Joseph Estrada was impeached and booted out of Malacañang after Ilocos Sur Rep. Luis "Chavit" Singson disclosed that he had been receiving payola from jueteng operators.

Admitting that the issue was affecting the President, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez urged the whistle-blower to come out and prove his allegations.

"If it's true, they had better come out now. It's unfair, it reflects badly on the President," Gonzalez told Department of Justice reporters.

He said the whistle-blower should come out like Singson.

Lacson knows

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Estrada's former police chief, said he knew the jueteng payola takers code-named M1, M2 and JS7.

"I just know them," Lacson said, but he declined to name names.

"It's obvious who these people are. Let it not come from me. You can guess who these people are, (if you read) between the lines," he said.

He said the names of the beneficiaries of jueteng payoffs would surely come out if a Senate investigation was conducted.

Lacson reiterated that when he was chief of the PNP he never accepted jueteng money.

He said jueteng money was used during the national elections in May 2004.

"It started in the election, fund-raising for the election. That is why there were many who were appointed because of their contribution to the election from jueteng," Lacson said.

First Family

In the House of Representatives, Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez moved to take the heat off the President's family and relatives.

Golez filed House Resolution No. 747 which seeks authority from the plenary to open an inquiry into the "reported increase in illegal gambling activities."

He said the House committee on public order and security should take the lead in the inquiry, followed by the House committee on games and amusement.

Blind item

But Golez said the inquiry would not focus on the involvement of M1, M2 and JS7.

"I don't think we should react to a blind item," said Golez.

He said Congress should instead look into the exposé of Dagupan-Lingayen Archbishop Oscar Cruz.

The resolution cited a study by the Krusadang Bayan Laban sa Jueteng headed by Cruz showing that "jueteng and other illegal numbers games are in fact more rampant today than during the governance of President Joseph Estrada." *With reports from Armand N. Nocum and Michael Lim Ubac*

Hu arriving tonight for 3-day state visit

From page A1

party are due to arrive at 6:50 p.m. at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City. They will be welcomed by a delegation composed of Vice President Noli de Castro, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona and the country's influential taipans led by Lucio Tan.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had nominated Guingona to be the next ambassador to China, but his appointment has yet to be taken up by the Commission on Appointments.

Bilateral talks

Hu will be given full military honors and a 21-gun salute when he goes to Malacañang tomorrow for bilateral talks with the President. The two met last week during the Asian-African leaders' summit in Jakarta.

China's trade and investment ties with the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries have grown rapidly in recent years. It now ranks as the Philippines' fourth-biggest trade partner from 12th biggest in 2001.

Chinese foreign direct investment in Southeast Asia has also been on the rise as Beijing, encouraging firms under a "Go Out" policy, seeks to secure resources and raise its diplomatic profile in a region long seen as America and Japan's backyard.

After their talks, Ms Arroyo and Hu will witness the signing of business agreements, as well as the presentation of the first edition of a stamp commemorating the 30th anniversary of Philippine-Chinese relations.

One of the agreements is a memorandum of understanding between China Eximbank and the Department of Finance on the use of a credit facility worth $300 million, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye told reporters in Malacañang.

"The Philippines is negotiating that this (credit facility) be earmarked for the Malolos-Clark leg of the Northrail project," he said.

Nickel mines

Another agreement involves an $800-million investment of Jinchuan and Shanghai Baosteel and Philinco in the Nonoc nickel mines, Bunye said.

The Supreme Court opened the door to foreign investors last December with a ruling that foreign firms could own up to 100 percent of Philippine mining ventures.

Jose Antonio, Philippine special envoy to China, told Reuters that local mining firm Benguet Corp. was likely to sign a deal with state-owned China Metallurgical Corp. during Hu's visit to develop a nickel reserve in the northern Philippines.

That deal could be worth $800 million, the amount Benguet estimates it needs to develop the reserve.

The third agreement to be signed is an investment of Shanghai Seeinglong Biotech Pharmaceuticals in a manufacturing, packaging and distribution hub of pharmaceuticals at the Clark Special Economic Zone.

In the afternoon, Hu will address the joint sessions of Congress at the Batasang Pambansa complex in Quezon City. Later, he will attend a private cocktail reception with the President and a state banquet in Malacañang.

On Thursday, Hu will meet with Chinese Embassy officials, lay a wreath at the Rizal Monument in Rizal Park, visit Fort Santiago in Intramuros and Kaisa, a Chinese-Filipino organization, before leaving the country.

Closer security ties

"China is using her economic strength to win over the support of her Asian neighbors diplomatically and she seems to be winning the campaign," said Benito Lim, a political science professor at the University of the Philippines.

One of Washington's strongest allies in the region, the Philippines has also moved to strengthen security and defense ties with China.

Beijing agreed to give the Philippines $1.2 million in military assistance when Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz visited China last year and the two countries said they would increase exchanges between military officers.

Ms Arroyo surprised many last year when she made China her first foreign destination after winning a new term in May elections.

Lim said the President needed to tread carefully in expanding military links with China to avoid irritating the United States and the older generation within the Philippine military.

Spratly Islands

"A lot of Filipinos who are close to the Americans, especially in the retired section of the military, would like the President to tread with caution," he said.

Diplomatic ties between Manila and Beijing were forged in 1975, but it took another 20 years to open defense and military relations.

The one major irritant in relations remains the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, which are claimed in whole or in part by six states including China and the Philippines.

But even here there are signs of a thaw.

State oil firms in China, the Philippines and Vietnam signed a deal in March for a three-year joint marine study in the South China Sea, including the Spratly Islands.

The Philippine and Chinese state firms are set to follow up that agreement during Hu's visit with a deal to hunt for oil in the Calamina area off the coast of Palawan in the western Philippines, Philippine officials said Thursday. *With reports from Nikko Dizon and Reuters*

High court fees trigger IBP 'revolt'

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Defying their president, members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines voted over the weekend to mount another challenge against what they deemed as "exorbitant court fees" imposed by the Supreme Court.

Lawyer Abelardo Estrada, IBP Baguio chapter president and host of the 10th national convention of lawyers here, said most of 1,287 lawyers who attended the convention wanted the new IBP officials to immediately file the protest before the high court should outgoing IBP president Jose Cadiz refuse to heed their demand.

Cadiz had withdrawn the lawyers' petitions against Republic Act No. 9227, the law that increased judges' wages using court revenues.

He said the government's fiscal crisis compelled him to save the judiciary instead because the high court might not be able to maintain judges in the provinces unless it raised court fees to reasonable levels.

Lawyer Leonardo de Vera, IBP executive vice president, questioned Cadiz's decision during the plenary session on Friday. De Vera was elected as the new IBP president but would assume the post in June.

De Vera and lawyers Carlos Valdez of Mindanao and Dante Ilaya of Batangas were the only members of the IBP board of directors who opposed Cadiz's initiative to pull out a consolidated petition by IBP chapters before the SC questioning the constitutionality of RA 9227.

Supreme Court Associate Justice Reynato Puno on Tuesday said the tribunal agreed to waive the increases for three types of court fees and taxes that affect poor litigants.

"But the fees are still high. The IBP sees that getting justice has become very expensive. This [scenario] is what we marched for [in 2004]. Most of the 35 IBP chapters, including the Baguio chapter, filed individual petitions to get the fees lowered, but we did not know the board was negotiating [with the SC about the three compromise fees] on our behalf," Estrada said in Filipino.

He said IBP members wanted Cadiz to explain why they were not informed about the compromise. But, he said, "Cadiz decided to remain silent and in the background to avoid provoking a debate on the floor."

Estrada said the IBP is aware that the fiscal deficit has affected the judiciary.

"The IBP is still affected because it gets its legal aid fund from the Supreme Court [and will therefore benefit from the court fee increases]. But we simply want answers. Is RA 9227 constitutional? We need to let the case take its natural course before the SC," he said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, April 26, 2005
5th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 14:19-28
Gospel: John 14:27-31

Jesus said to his disciples, "Peace be with you; I give you my peace. Not as the world gives peace do I give it to you. Do not be troubled; do not be afraid. You heard me say: 'I am going away, but I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

"I have told you this now before it takes place, so that when it does happen you may believe. It is very little what I may still tell you, for the ruler of this world is at hand, although there is nothing in me that he can claim. But see, the world must know that I love the Father and that I do what the Father has taught me to do. Come now, let us go."

Commentary

Jesus blesses his community before he goes out into the garden where he will be arrested and then murdered. He blesses them with Peace! "I give you my peace. Not as the world gives peace do I give it to you. Do not be troubled." This peace is strong enough to abide through injustice and evil, through violence and betrayal, even stronger than death. Jesus leaves them his peace but goes to face his death—so that all might know how much he loves the Father and does only what his Father commands him. Come let us go—it is the invitation we are given—to walk with Jesus into the world, facing down evil with the peace of God deep with us, secure in the sanctuary of Jesus' words and blessing. We are the followers of Peace incarnate. Do we bring peace by our presence, our words, our dialogue, our facing of evil, our resistance without harm, our forgiveness, all for the love of our Father? Peace—it is given. Now it is for us to give away to all the world.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

LABOR LAW (LABOR RELATIONS LAW)—To constitute unfair labor practice, employee's dismissal need not be entirely motivated by union activities - Several factors strongly give credence to the contention of respondents that the real reason behind the shutdown of the corporation was the formation of their union. Note that, to constitute an unfair labor practice, the dismissal need not entirely and exclusively be motivated by the union's activities or affiliations. It is enough that the discrimination was a contributing factor. If the basic inspiration for the act of the employer is derived from the affiliation or activities of the union, the former's assignment of another reason, no matter how seemingly valid, is unavailing. Concededly, the determination to cease operations is a management prerogative that the State does not usually interfere in. Indeed, no business can be required to continue operating at a loss, simply to maintain the workers in employment. That would be a taking of property without due process of law. But where it is manifest that the closure is motivated not by a desire to avoid further losses, but to discourage the workers from organizing themselves into a union for more effective negotiations with management, the State is bound to intervene. (Citations omitted.) (Justice Panganiban, Third Division, Me-Shurn Corporation v. Me-Shurn Workers Union-FSM, G.R. No. 156292, January 11, 2005)

By R.B. Vera

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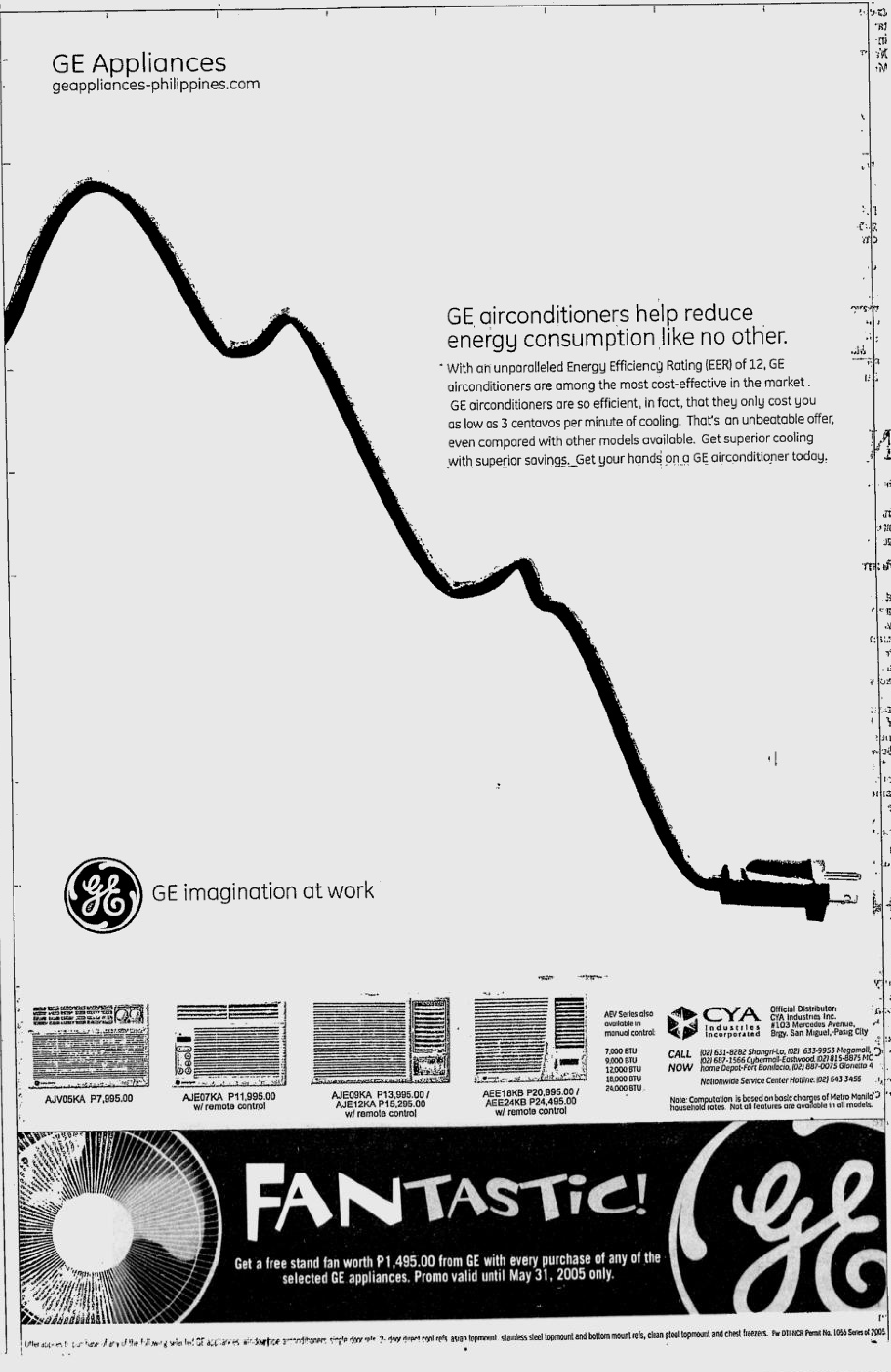

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Japan's worst rail crash in 4 decades

AMAGASAKI, Japan—At least 50 people were killed and some 300 injured Monday when a commuter train derailed, sending a carriage hurtling into an apartment block in Japan's deadliest rail accident in four decades.

Authorities suspected that the train's 23-year-old driver was speeding and failed to negotiate a corner, throwing four of the train's seven carriages from the tracks in Amagasaki, a working-class western town near Osaka and Kobe.

The train, which was carrying some 580 passengers in the morning rush hour, appeared to be speeding as the driver was running late after he missed a station and had to back up to let off passengers.

The remains of one carriage were strewn across the apartment building up to the third floor, with rescue crews racing to tear through the metal to find any survivors. Another carriage lay tilted on the ground beside it.

"We have confirmed the deaths of 25 males and 24 females. We are yet to identify the gender of one body," said a spokesperson for the fire department in Amagasaki, some 400 km west of Tokyo.

He said 235 people were injured. Police put the injury toll at 304 people.

"Passengers who were standing were thrown away and passengers who were sitting were slammed onto the floor. It was just chaos," said Tsuneo Hara, an advertising company employee from Osaka, who was hospitalized for a leg injury.

"Some 10 people could not stand up and lay on the floor motionless. Female passengers were just screaming and crying," Hara said.

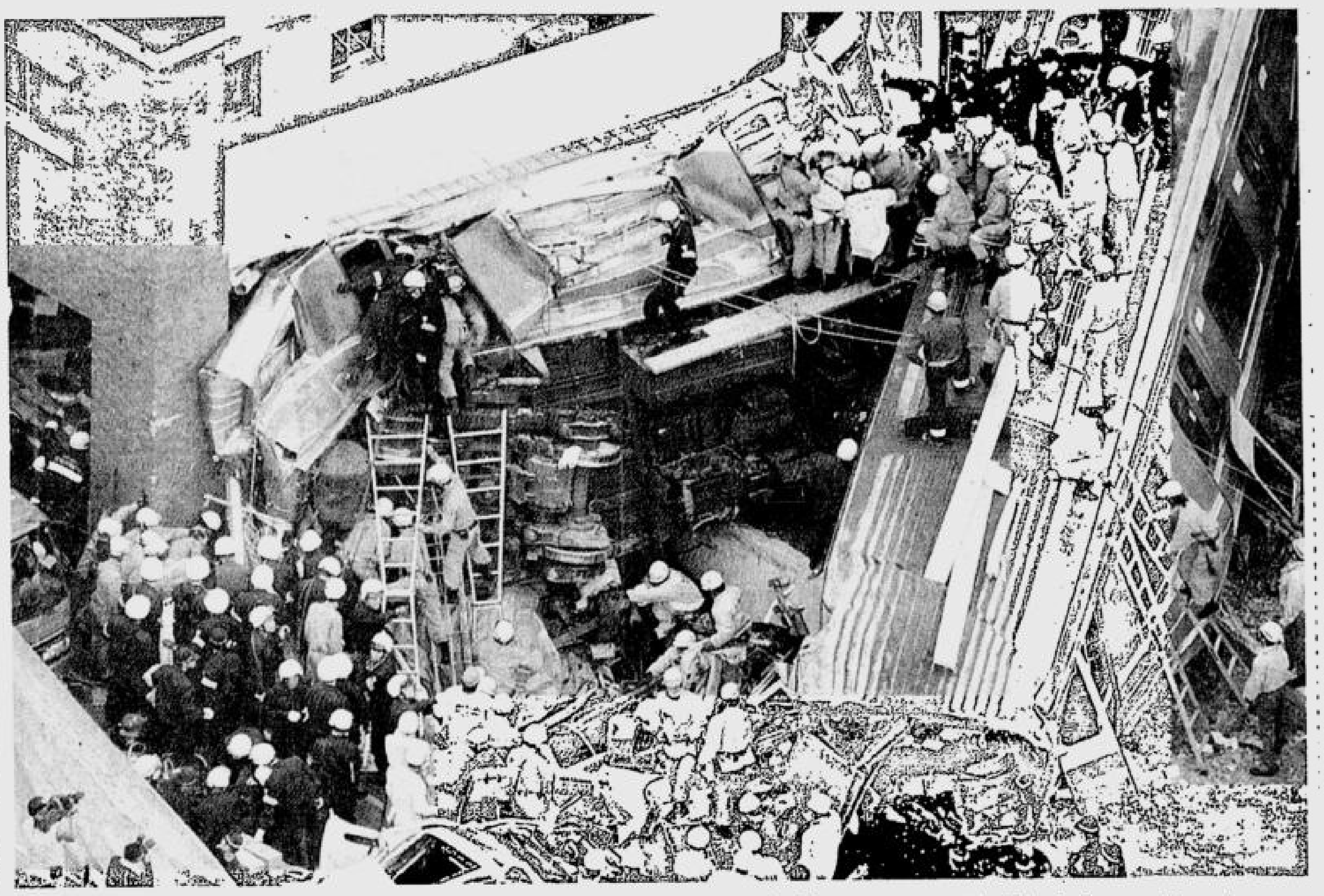
Relatives rushed between hospitals to look at lists for any clue as to whether their loved ones were dead or alive.

"My husband is still missing. I don't know what to do," said a sobbing Naoko Fukunishi after checking the lists at Amagasaki Central Hospital. "We just celebrated his 61st birthday yesterday."

Japan has one of the world's most extensive and safest train networks, transporting some 60 million people—or nearly half the nation's population—each day.

It was the deadliest tragedy since 1963 when a freight train collided with a truck in Yokohama near Tokyo and then was hit by two passenger trains from opposite directions. That accident killed 161 people.

"This is horrible and serious disaster," Transport Minister Kazuo Kitagawa said as he visited the scene Monday, ordering a "thorough investigation." *AFP*



RESCUE workers conduct rescue operations after a derailed commuter train smashed into an apartment building in Amagasaki, western Japan April 25, killing at least 50 people and injuring 300 others.

REUTERS

Pope Benedict reaches out to other Christians, Muslims

VATICAN CITY—A day after reaching out to other Christians and to Jews in his installation Mass, Pope Benedict XVI met with members of the Muslim community on Monday, assuring them that the church wanted to continue building "bridges of friendship" that he said could foster peace in the world.

Benedict made the comments in a meeting with religious leaders who had attended his installation ceremony, saying he was particularly grateful that members of the Muslim community were present. "I express my appreciation for the growth of dialogue between Muslims and Christians, both at the local and international level," he said.

He noted that the world is currently marked by conflicts but said it longs for peace.

"Yet peace is also a duty to which all peoples must be committed, especially those who profess to belong to religious traditions," he said. "Our efforts to come together and foster dialogue are a valuable contribution to building peace on solid foundations."

"It is therefore imperative to engage in authentic and sincere dialogue, built on respect for the dignity of every human person, created as we Christians firmly believe, in the image and likeness of God," he said.

The Vatican didn't say which Muslim leaders attended the meeting, which was closed to the press.

"I assure you that the church wants to continue building bridges of friendship with the followers of all religions, in order to seek the true good of every person and of society as a whole," he said.

The message was significant because Benedict had left out any specific mention of Muslims in his inaugural homily, although he had directed a greeting to "believers and non-believers alike."

He specifically mentioned Jews, calling them his "brothers and sisters" who were joined with Catholics in a "shared spiritual heritage." He also reached out to other Christians, calling several times for full communion of Christians.

Benedict repeated that message on Monday, telling ecumenical leaders that he fully supported the need to work toward uniting Christians divided by schism and said the ecumenical presence at his installation was a good sign. *AP*

US prison population rises again

WASHINGTON—The US penal system, the world's largest, maintained its steady growth in 2004, the Department of Justice reported on Sunday.

The latest official half-yearly figures found the nation's prison and jail population at 2,131,180 in the middle of last year, an increase of 2.3 percent over 2003.

The United States has incarcerated 726 people per 100,000 of its population, seven to 10 times as many as most other democracies. The rate for England is 142 per 100,000, for France 91 and for Japan 58.

The figures issued by the department's statistical unit showed that 12.6 percent of black males in their late 20s were behind bars. The comparable rate for Hispanic males was 3.6 percent and for whites 1.7 percent.

"Unless we promote alternatives to prison, the nation will continue to lead the world in imprisonment," said Jason Ziedenberg, executive director of the Justice Policy Institute, a think-tank that studies prison issues.

According to the justice department, violent crime in the United States fell by over 33 percent from 1994 to 2003 and property crimes fell by 23 percent.

Yet the prison population has continued to climb, increasing an annual average of 3.5 percent since 1995, partly due to high recidivism. Within three years of their release, two of every three prisoners are back behind bars.

Criminologists attribute the growth in the prison population to "get tough on crime" policies that have subjected hundreds of thousands of nonviolent drug and property offenders to long mandatory sentences. *Reuters*

Bolton nomination in trouble

WASHINGTON—John Bolton's controversial nomination for US ambassador to the United Nations appeared at risk Sunday, as new allegations surfaced and a growing number of lawmakers expressed doubts.

The administration hawk has been at the center of weeks of controversy over charges he bullied staff and tried to tailor intelligence to suit his political agenda.

Even words of support from President George W. Bush have failed to end Bolton's problems.

A former woman staff member accused Bolton of seeking to have her sacked in the 1980s after a disagreement over US policy on infant formula in developing nations, The Boston Globe reported Sunday.

Bolton also rejected advice from the US ambassador to South Korea in 2003 to tone down a speech condemning Pyongyang which it said almost scuppered the start of international talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons program, Time magazine reported.

And the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which is vetting Bolton, is examining allegations that he misused or hyped flawed intelligence against Syria, China and Iran, Newsweek magazine reported. *AFP*

TENS of thousands of people march down the main Reforma avenue in Mexico City during the "March of Silence" in support of Mexico City Mayor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador April 24.

AP

Massive crowds back Mexico City mayor

MEXICO CITY—Hundreds of thousands of Mexicans took to the streets Sunday to support embattled Mexico City Mayor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and protest a legal case that could prevent him from running in the 2006 presidential election.

Blaming politics for his legal troubles, Lopez Obrador defied prosecutors and told the massive crowd that he would return to work as Mexico City mayor.

"Tomorrow (Monday) I return to work in my office," he told supporters jamming Mexico City's central plaza.

Lopez Obrador is one of Mexico's most popular politicians and is ranked by opinion polls ahead of the candidate supported by incumbent President Vicente Fox and his National Action Party (PAN) in next year's presidential poll.

Lopez Obrador was forced out of his job after Congress stripped his parliamentary immunity on April 7 to face prosecution for defying a court order when he condemned private land to build a public road.

The populist mayor claims the move was to stop him running in next year's presidential elections.

Supporters hoisted placards saying "Fighting for Hope," and "Lopez Obrador: 2006." The march was also supported by lawmakers of the mayor's own Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD).

Mexico City's Zocalo plaza, with a capacity for 150,000, was jammed. Protest organizers said 1.2 million people jammed into the square's adjoining streets to join the "March of Silence." Federal officials however said that the crowds numbered 120,000.

Lopez Obrador had difficulty reaching the podium because of the massive crowd. Several other leaders of his party were unable to follow him to the front of the demonstration.

Politicians of Mexico's two main parties, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and Fox's PAN voted to strip Lopez Obrador's immunity so that he could be prosecuted for disobeying the court order.

If prosecuted, under Mexican law Lopez Obrador cannot run for the presidency. *AFP*

Is it time to change B.C. and A.D. to reflect changing times?

By Michael Gormley

ALBANY, New York—In a world encouraged to embrace differences, B.C. and A.D. are increasingly finding themselves on the wrong end of the religious sensitivity meter.

Educators and historians say schools from North America to Australia have been changing the terms Before Christ to Before Common Era and anno Domini (Latin for year of the Lord) to Common Era. In short, they're referred to as B.C.E. and C.E.

The change has stoked the ire of Christian conservatives and some religious leaders who view it as an attack on a social and political order that has been in place for centuries. Ironically, for more than a century Hebrew lessons have used B.C.E. and C.E., with C.E. sometimes referring to Christian Era.

That begs the question: Can old and new coexist in harmony, or must one give way to the other to reflect changing times and attitudes?

The terms B.C. and A.D. have [illegible] iguus, an abbot in Rome, devised them as a way to determine the date for Easter for Pope St. John I. The terms were continued under the Gregorian Calendar, created in 1582 under Pope Gregory XIII.

Although most calendars are based on an epoch or person, B.C. and A.D. have always presented a particular problem for historians: There is no year zero. Critics say that's additional reason to replace the Christian-based terms.

When Jews or Muslims have [illegible] calendar... that's difficult for us," said Steven M. Brown, dean of the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education at The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. "They are hard for non-Jews, because they assume a centrality of Jesus... it's not offensive, but it's not sensitive to my religious sensibilities."

The new terms were introduced by academics in the 1990s in public elementary and high school classrooms.

"I [illegible] using B.C.E. when some of my students began asking more earnestly than before just what B.C. meant," said Bill Everdell, a history book editor, teaching instructor and Brooklyn history teacher in the private, formerly religious St. Ann's School. Everdell said most history teachers he knows use B.C.E. and C.E. "I realized the courtesy was mine to extend."

He said the national Advanced Placement test in history has used the new terms since 2001.

In New York, the terms are entering public classrooms through textbooks and worksheets, but B.C.E. and C.E. are not part of the state's official curriculum and there is no plan to debate the issue, said state Education Department spokesperson Jonathan Burman.

"The standard textbooks primarily used in New York use the terms A.D. and B.C.," Burman said. Schools, however, may choose to use the new terms, although B.C. and A.D. will continue to be used in the state Regents exams, many of which are required for high school graduation. *AP*

New era for Lebanon as last Syrian troops leave

BEIRUT—The last Syrian troops were heading out of Lebanon on Monday after a 29-year military presence, a move being hailed by the Beirut press as the start of a new era.

A UN team is due in the region this week to verify the withdrawal, carried out in the face of intense international pressure following the killing of ex-premier Rafiq Hariri that plunged Lebanon into turmoil.

"A few hours from now, and a new era will start in Lebanon," read the headline in the French-language L'Orient-Le Jour newspaper.

"Thirty years of Syrian presence will be over in a few hours," said the top-selling An-Nahar.

Syrian troops were seen bidding farewell to shopowners in the town of Anjar near the Masnaa border crossing and where the Syrian army and intelligence command in Lebanon has been based for decades.

Along the main highway leading to Masnaa, only a Syrian army checkpoint and intelligence post could be seen in the commercial town of Shtaura.

Most Syrian troops, bar a token force scheduled to take the salute at a farewell ceremony in Tuesday, have now crossed the border.

Syria has been the main powerbroker in neighboring Lebanon since it first deployed troops there a year after the 1975 outbreak of the civil war, and further tightened its grip after the conflict ended in 1990.

Damascus' control extended through Lebanon's security services and its allies who tightly controlled political and economic life and were untouchable until recently.

Tuesday's ceremony at a military air base in the eastern town of Rayaq will occur on the same day UN Secretary General Kofi Annan is due to deliver his report on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 on Lebanon.

The resolution, which was adopted in September, calls for the pullout of all foreign forces from Lebanon, the end of foreign interference in its internal affairs and the disarming of militias.

"The UN team due to verify the Syrian withdrawal is expected to travel Tuesday to Damascus to meet with the Syrian army command and obtain the necessary reports, maps and documents," a diplomatic source said. *AFP*

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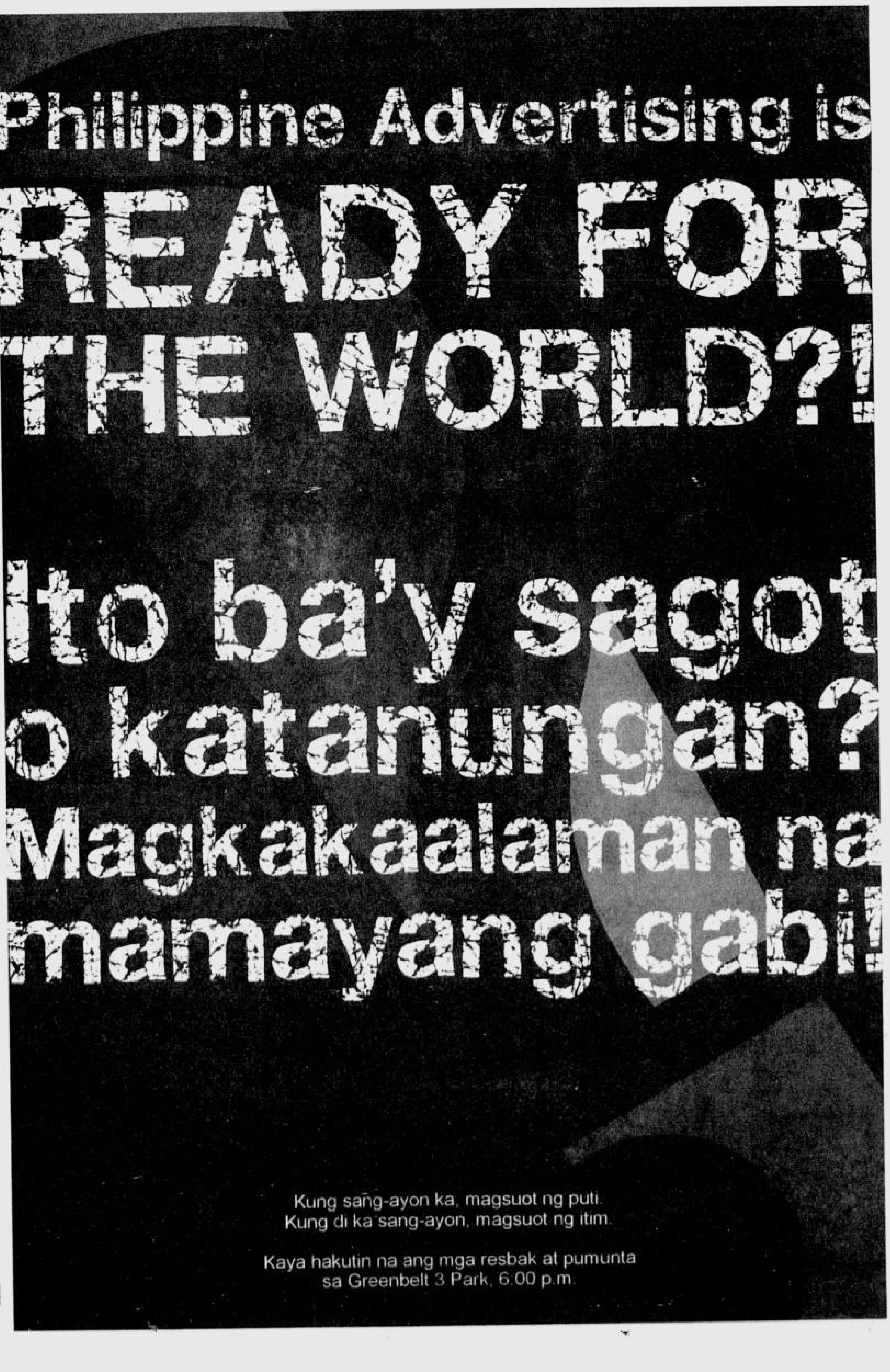

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War booty returned to Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia—The third and final piece of the Axum obelisk was returned to Ethiopia from Italy on Monday, as thousands cheered and celebrated the end of an almost 70-year dispute over a symbol of African civilization stolen by European troops as a war prize.

"This is the land of the Queen of Sheba and the obelisk belongs here," said Ethiopian President Girma Wolde-Giogis, wiping tears of joy from his eyes. "I never thought I would be alive to see its return."

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi also watched as a massive cargo plane landed in the northern Ethiopian town and workers unloaded the 1,700-year-old piece of carved granite.

The 24-meter high funeral stone, or stele, had been taken in 1937 on the orders of fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

The Italian government first promised to return the obelisk, which was erected in the Circus Maximus in central Rome, in 1947.

"I am very happy and relieved that at last the obelisk is back," Meles said after receiving the 60-ton top piece at the airport shortly after dawn. "I think this will bring about a major change of attitude in those countries that have treasures that do not belong to them."

The granite monument symbolizes the powerful Axumite Kingdom, which was established between 200 and 100 B.C. and ruled the entire region that stretched across the Red Sea. When it was removed, the obelisk was in fragments, having been toppled during a 16th-century Muslim rebellion.

"Justice has been done," said Abune Paulos, head of the 40 million-member Ethiopian Orthodox Church. "This was the right thing for Italy to do."

Ethiopia hopes to re-erect the three sections of the 180-ton monument in October. But concerns remain over whether the obelisk would collapse if erected on its original site, which archeologists describe as honeycombed with tombs.

Dozens of politicians, religious leaders and elderly men who once fought against the brutal five-year Italian occupation of Ethiopia that ended in 1941 stood shoulder to shoulder at Axum airport, to receive the monument.

Massive obelisks are among a few tangible remains of the past glory of Axum, an area lying in the shadow of the Adwa Mountains where Emperor Menelik II defeated the Italians in 1896—the greatest modern victory of an African army over a European force.

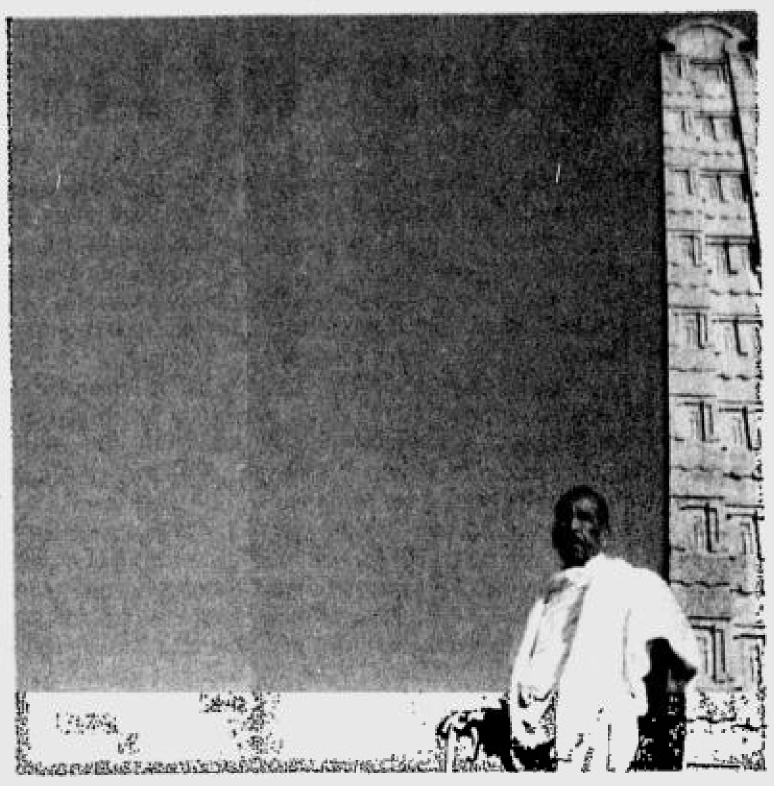
Ethiopians now hope the return of the obelisk will pave the way for hundreds of priceless artifacts locked up in palaces and museums around the world to be handed back. One of the most valuable is one of two copies Kebre Negast, known as the Glory of Kings, which is Ethiopia's holy book and is currently held in the British Museum.

Historian Richard Pankhurst said the obelisk is the most important of Ethiopia's stolen treasures to be returned.

"This will open a new era in the restoration of loot from the third world," he said.

Italians also hope the return of the treasure will draw a line under occupation of Ethiopia, where Italian troops used mustard gas against civilians and killed thousands.

"This marks a new chapter," Italian ambassador Guido La Tella said. "This also marks an end of our colonial period." *AP*



ABEBE Alemayehu stands Nov. 19, 2004 by the surviving Obelisk of Axum, the twin of the one taken by Mussolini's troops in 1937 in Axum. AFP

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Disney execs apply feng shui for HK park

WHEN building the new entrance to Hong Kong Disneyland, Walt Disney executives decided to shift the angle of the front gate by 12 degrees. They did so after consulting a feng shui specialist, who said the change would ensure prosperity for the park. Disney also put a bend in the walkway from the train station to the gate, to make sure the flow of positive energy, or chi, did not slip past the entrance and out to the China Sea.

Heeding the advice of a feng shui consultant is one of many steps Disney executives have taken at the park to reflect the local culture—and to make sure they do not repeat some mistakes of the past.

The financial stakes are high: International growth is a critical part of Disney's expansion efforts. Mainland China is expected to become one of the world's largest tourist destinations in the next 15 years, according to the World Tourism Organization.

Plans for Hong Kong Disneyland, Disney's 11th theme park and a replica of the original Disneyland, began in 1999 for the undeveloped Lantau Island, a 30-minute train ride from downtown Hong Kong. Built on Penny's Bay and flanked by mountains, the park is a venture with the Hong Kong government and the first of the parks that Disney wants to build in China, including one in Shanghai.

Some of the dazzling visual effects and nods to cultural differences at Hong Kong Disneyland: one of the park's main ballrooms measures 888 square meters, because 8 is thought to be a number of fortune, said Wing Chao, who is the master planner of architecture and design at Walt Disney Imagineering.

In Chinese, the number four is considered bad luck so there are no fourth-floor buttons in the elevators at the Hollywood Hotel or other hotels in the park.

Cash registers are close to corners or along walls, where such placement is believed to increase prosperity.

And in the park's upscale restaurant, Crystal Lotus, Disney installed five feng shui elements that include water, wood, earth, metal and fire, which glows on a screen behind bottles in the bar.

After the mishaps at Euro Disney it is easy to understand why the company would take such pains. "I don't know anything about fire and kitchens and where fire belongs and what doesn't," said Jay Rasulo, president of Disney's theme parks and resorts division. "But I certainly have learned that you need to respect people." *New York Times News Service*

MISS UKRAINE

UKRAINE BEAUTY
Yulia Pinchuk, 18, a student from Novovolynsk, holds the crown after winning the Miss Ukraine 2005 Beauty Contest in Kiev, April 24. 26 girls from all regions of Ukraine took a part for the final of the contest who will then go on to fight for the "Miss World," "Miss Universe" and "Miss Europe" titles. AFP

Series of bomb attacks in Iraq kill at least 23

BAGHDAD—At least 23 people died and more than 80 were wounded in a series of bomb attacks near a mosque in Baghdad and outside a police academy in the north of the country, security officials said.

Amid the Sunday violence, Islamabad said a Pakistani hostage held for two weeks had been released, while controversial politician Ahmed Chalabi said delays in forming a government were playing into the hands of insurgents.

Two explosions late Sunday in a mixed Shiite-Sunni district of the Iraqi capital apparently targeted an area close to the Shiite Hussayniah al-Beit mosque, killing 16 and wounding 50.

"A bomb exploded and, when people ran out near the Hussayniah al-Beit mosque, a car driven by a suicide bomber ploughed into them," an interior ministry official said.

Earlier, two suicide car bombs went off outside a police academy in Tikrit, killing at least seven people and wounding 37. Police casualties accounted for five of the dead, police and hospital sources said.

The mosque bombing was the latest in a series of attacks on Shiites, with a suicide car bomb exploding outside another Shiite mosque during weekly prayers on Friday, killing nine people and leaving 26 wounded.

The majority Shiites won control of parliament in Jan. 30 elections, while the Sunni Arab minority, which dominated the ousted regime of Saddam Hussein and all previous Iraqi governments, largely boycotted the poll.

The insurgency that has raged in Sunni areas since Saddam's ouster in 2003 has increasingly resorted to sectarian attacks.

Militants loyal to al-Qaida's Iraq frontman Abu Musab al-Zarqawi claimed responsibility for the twin Tikrit attacks in an Internet statement. The statement's authenticity could not be verified, however.

In Islamabad, Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said that a kidnapped Pakistani Embassy employee was released Sunday and in good health despite his two weeks in captivity.

"Malik Mohammad Javed has been released, he is hail and hearty," Aziz said during a live telecast. "We are thankful to the countries who helped in his release," the premier said, without naming any nation.

Javed, 45, disappeared April 9 when he went for evening prayers at a Baghdad mosque. A previously unknown group calling itself the Omar bin Khattab group claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. *AFP*

IRAQI women mourn their relatives who were killed in two bomb blasts in Baghdad's Muslim Shiite district of Shula April 25.

AFP

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Entente tops agenda for US, Hanoi 30 years after war

HANOI—As Vietnam marks the 30th anniversary of its victory over US forces, it is expected to avoid any provocative noise about its former enemy, as the two sides now seek to forge constructive ties, analysts say.

Ten years ago, while marking two decades after the war, the former enemies got around to establishing diplomatic relations. In 2000, the ceremonies were marked with acerbic statements by Vietnam on the persisting ravages caused by Agent Orange, the defoliant used by US forces during the war.

But this year, Vietnam has no intention of invoking the war in vindictive terms. Hanoi-Washington ties are at their best yet.

"It has been increasingly better," said Adam Sitkoff, executive director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Hanoi.

"There are small hiccups every so often," Sitkoff said. "But a part of the maturity of the relations between two countries is for them to be able to disagree."

The most vociferous Vietnamese veterans, who had spoken of "hellfires" in store for the Americans before the US invasion of Iraq, are expected to be muzzled this week.

"Closer US-Vietnam relations are likely to mute anti-American rhetoric," said Carl Thayer, Vietnam specialist at the Johns Hopkins University in Washington.

"Vietnam also does not want to irritate the United States when it has so much to gain economically."

Gradually, the scars from the war during which 58,000 Americans and three million Vietnamese were killed, are healing.

"Thirty years have passed since the end of the war. This is time to open up a new chapter in the relationship between Vietnam and the United States," said Vietnamese foreign ministry spokesperson Le Dung.

Till the late 1990s, the main preoccupation in bilateral ties was the search for the bodies of Americans deemed missing in action (MIAs). Today the two sides are focused on burgeoning trade ties.

Since the signing of their Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) in December 2000, two-way trade has rocketed from $1.5 billion in 2001 to $7 billion in 2004, according to the American Chamber of Commerce.

Moreover, Washington's approval is crucial for Hanoi's accession to the World Trade Organization. Vietnam hopes to join the body as soon as possible but is aware it still needs to make significant concessions.

The United States notably wants Vietnam to open up several sectors to foreign investment and to overhaul its judiciary.

Hanoi, analysts say, has no choice but to humor Washington.

"On the economic plane, Vietnam today greatly needs the United States because it is under pressure to maintain its rapid economic growth. It's undeniable," said a Vietnamese diplomat previously posted in Washington.

Economic issues are not the only blot on the landscape, however. Political problems mostly invoked by Washington also loom large.

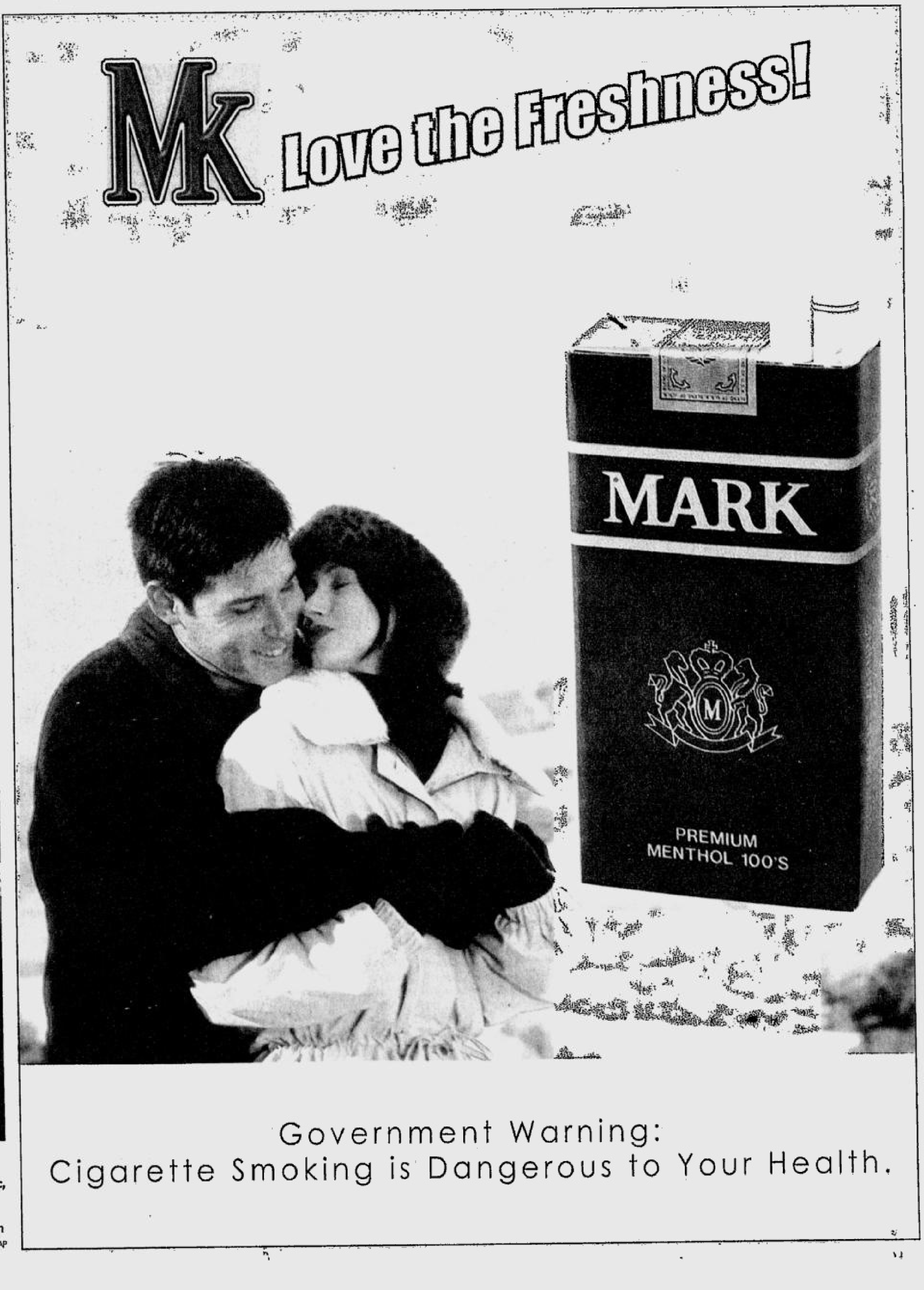
Vietnam was classified by the US state department last year as one of the "countries of particular concern" in matters of religious freedom.

Highly active anti-Vietnam lobbies, including members of the Vietnamese diaspora, routinely attack the communist regime for its hard line on dissent or repression against ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands. *AFP*

DUONG THỊ XUÂN

FLOWERS and a portrait of North Vietnamese soldier Duong Thi Xuan mark her memorial gravesite April 24, at a cemetery near Dong Loc, Vietnam. The memorial site is dedicated to 10 female soldiers, all unmarried and young, who were killed during a massive US bombing raid in the central Vietnam province in 1968.

AP



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Quixotic

EDITORIAL

INSTITUTO Cervantes celebrated the 4th centenary of the publication of "Don Quixote de la Mancha" with the first public non-stop reading of the novel in Asia from April 22 to 24. More than 500 Spanish speakers and students participated in the 50-hour, round-the-clock reading of "Don Quixote," which, after the Bible, is the world's most widely translated book.

It was a fitting celebration of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, the author, supreme innovator of Spanish literature, and of "Don Quixote," considered one of the greatest modern novels. By today's standards, "Don Quixote" would be considered a very long and boring novel by young readers with very short attention spans. But in its time, it was a bestseller and was such a sensational literary work that it invited imitation by one writer who tried to pass off his work as a sequel.

Cervantes established, through "Don Quixote," a model for the new literary form that later came to be known as the novel. Don Quixote tells two interrelated stories: (1) the story of a man who imagines himself to be a knight errant at a time when society had forgotten the age of chivalry, and (2) the story of the writing of Don Quixote's story. And through this device, Cervantes makes the reader think about the act of writing and the act of reading.

But the book has many more layers and dimensions. It has been said that it appeals to man's seven ages: from the time he is a child at grade school to his dotage when he is just waiting for the call of the Grim Reaper. It is a work of art with as many aspects and bases for reflection as it has readers and students to seek them. In Chapter XX of Part II, for instance, no one would have expected the simple-minded and rustic Sancho Panza to speak with such depth on the subject of death. Everyone will discover something new at every reading of "Don Quixote."

Many languages, English among them, have borrowed the hero's name to describe a person inspired by lofty but impractical ideals. How many times have we heard people who would change their society or the world described as quixotic? And yet this may be a simplistic view of "Don Quixote," for in Part II of the novel, the idealistic Don Quixote becomes more and more like the realistic and practical Sancho Panza, and vice versa. This was called by Spanish critic Salvador de Madariaga the Sanchification of Don Quixote and the Quixotization of Sancho Panza.

The Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, in his book "The Tragic Sense of Life," said Don Quixote's philosophy cannot strictly be called idealism because he did not fight for ideas. "It was of the spiritual order; he fought for the spirit," De Unamuno said. And he also fought "for Dulcinea, for glory, for life, for survival."

De Unamuno said Don Quixote bequeathed to *Kultur* the concept of Quixotism: "a whole method, a whole epistemology, a whole esthetic, a whole ethics—above all, a whole religion—that is to say, a whole economy of things eternal and things divine, a whole hope in what is rationally absurd."

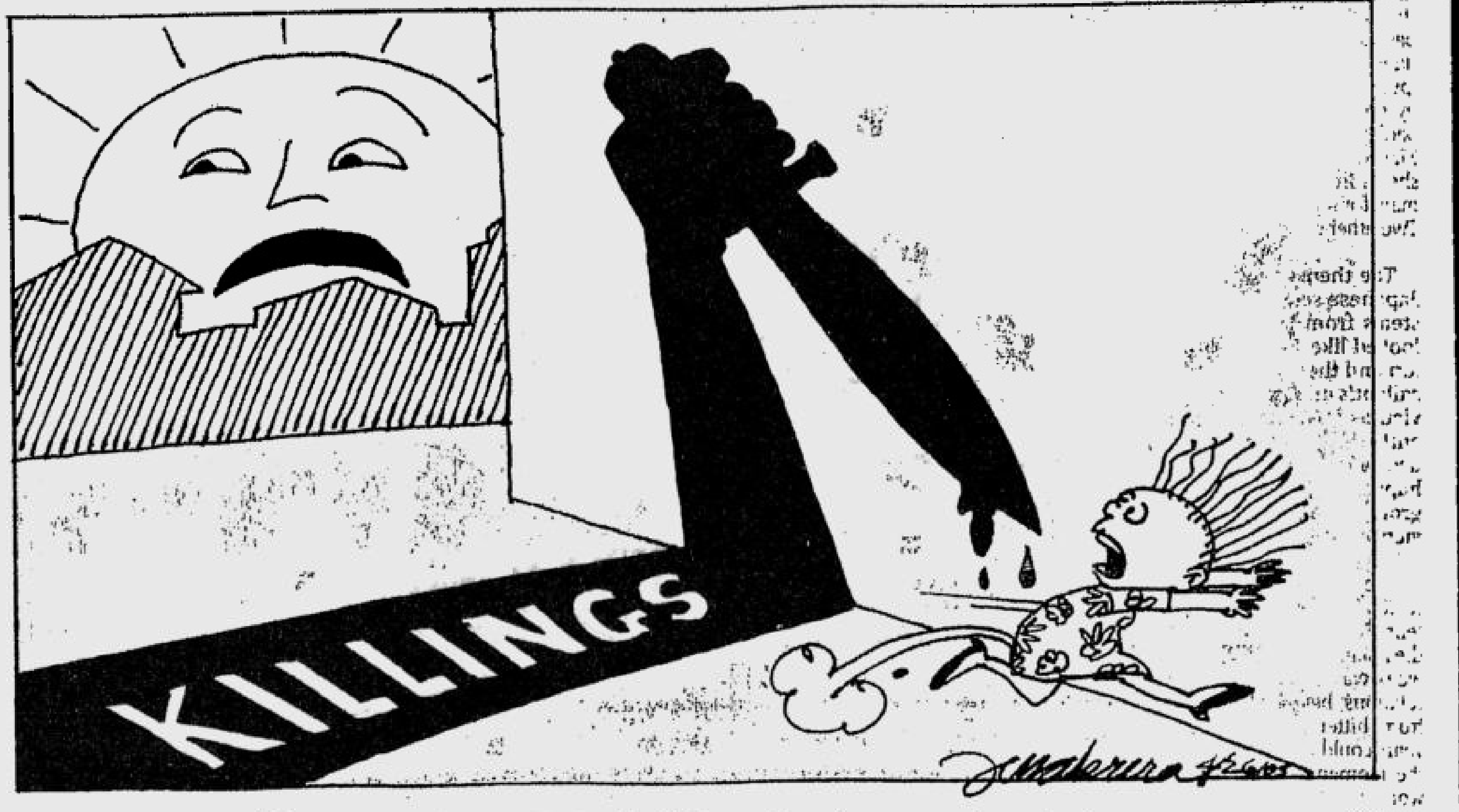
In Part II of the novel, Don Quixote dies (it is said that Cervantes killed him off to prevent other writers from writing imitation sequels) but he still lives among us in thought and in spirit. De Unamuno said that the new mission of Don Quixote today, in this world, is "to cry aloud, to cry aloud in the wilderness. But though men hear not, the wilderness hears, and one day it will be transformed into a resounding forest…"

There have been a few among us who have been called quixotic for espousing what others call "crazy" or "impractical" ideas. One of the more prominent among them is Nandy Pacheco who dared propose the idea of a Gunless Society in a country that is steeped in a gun culture. But gradually his idea is gaining acceptance as a solution to the unabated violence and killings in our country.

Quixotic need not mean impractical or crazy idealism. In this age of cynicism and materialism, we need to take up again the cause of Don Quixote, as seen by De Unamuno: to fight for our ideals and principles, to fight for life, for survival, for glory.

In Edmond Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac," the Comte de Guiche reminds Cyrano of Don Quixote's tilting with the windmills. De Guiche tells Cyrano: "Windmills, if you remember, can fling you down to the mud." And Cyrano replies: "Or lift you up among the stars."

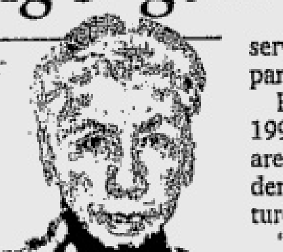
Especially in our depressed, pessimistic, dejected nation, we need a touch of the quixotic thinking and spirit. While remaining practical Sancho Panzas, for we have to eat and earn a living, we can still dream, embark on a quest and try to reach for the stars.



Shattering Makiling's 'gem' status

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado



"THEY'RE 'gems' of forest management in a region starved for examples of prudent resource stewardship," says Patrick Durst of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization.

The FAO senior regional forestry officer was referring to, among other things, four successful Philippine projects, among them Mount Makiling in Laguna. Just 60 kilometers from crammed Metro Manila, its 4,224 hectare "restored forest" is one of the country's 18 centers for plant diversity today. Botanical gardens, the National Arts Center and sites like Pook ni Maria Makiling ensure that it ranks among 32 key eco-tourism sites.

Thus, FAO included Makiling's rehabilitation, with 27 other case studies in its new 404-page book, "In Search Of Excellence: Exemplary Forest Management in Asia and the Pacific." The materials for the book were sifted from 172 reports submitted by 21 countries.

But Marikina's Rep. Del R. de Guzman may yet torpedo Makiling's "gem" status. To do that, he dipped into the congressional wastebasket to recycle a bill, rejected decisively thrice between 1964 to 1998.

De Guzman's brainstorm is House Bill No. 3005. It'd slice off 57.7 hectares of the forest reserve which straddles crucial watersheds and headwaters. He'd hand that to the Boy Scouts of the Philippines for periodic camping and jamborees.

"This bill will fragment Makiling's successful management, trigger loss of habitat and destruction of natural resources," University of the Philippines Los Baños chancellor Wilfredo David warned.

Thrice, legislators thumbed down similar chop-chop measures: House Bills 10549 and 3441 and Senate Bill 685. But De Guzman's measure bill may slip through. In Congress, stranger things have happened.

The measure would flush decades of conservation and preservation efforts down the tube. Parceling would trigger domino-like demands. "And we'll see a denuded Mt. Makiling," the UP memo notes.

Makiling once resembled other logged-over areas: a semi-arid wreck blanketed by sterile cogon grass. Trees were razed and, as fuel wood and charcoal, barged across Laguna de Bay to Manila.

"Lumuluha si Maria Makiling," the late National Scientist Dioscoro Umali said in a National Academy of Science and Technology address. This recalled the myth of goddess Maria Makiling who retreated to the peak as people abused her gifts. The former UPLB chancellor called for a reversal of the ecological plunder.

"In 1885, the Spanish engineer Enrique Abella described the Cambantoc River in Bay, Laguna, as one of the most important rivers in Makiling," Umali recalled. "That river has disappeared."

The "Dean" would find quiet satisfaction in FAO's analysis, written by UP's Juan Pulhin and Maricel Tapia: "Not all efforts to conserve and protect Mt. Makiling have been successful." But the reserve "has been maintained and improved, due to the commitment of its managers and participation of various stakeholders."

Within the reserve today are over 2,000 species of moss, plus fungi and algae, and varied species: 45 of mammals, 181 of birds, 65 of reptiles and 22 amphibians. "More are still left to be discovered and identified."

But the shoddy Boy Scouts' track record in managing their leased jamboree site may shatter de Guzman's silver platter.

Located within Molawin sub-watershed, the BSP site sprawls over portions of headwaters and highland areas of the Saran micro-watershed. It abuts natural forests and plantation areas.

These watersheds ensure water for Calamba City, Los Baños and Bay in Laguna plus Sto. Tomas and Tanauan in Batangas. They also serve farms, aquaculture ponds and industrial parks.

But the BSP laxly allowed squatters—17 in 1990 increasing to 85 in 2004—to invade the area. It hasn't evicted them, despite a court order. Instead, it built illegal permanent structures.

"BSP's performance in controlling forest occupancy reveals its ineffectiveness and delinquency as a forest manager," UP noted. BSP never claimed "it has the expertise or manpower to maintain watershed areas."

UP does. And it's policy of involving all stakeholders, from citizens to local governments, swept away the ruins and enabled nature to regenerate. "We have the track record," David says.

Calamba, Los Baños, Bay and Sto. Tomas as well as Metro Manila and nearby towns have directly benefited from Makiling's multiple roles. It's a lung for surrounding areas and a "huge sink absorbing pollutants and carbon." The reserve makes possible hydro-geothermal power and contributes to the Luzon electricity power grid. The forests also block catastrophic flashfloods that savaged Leyte, Aurora and Quezon.

Above all, Makiling is a training laboratory. It draws faculty members, researchers and students from abroad and colleges from all over: Cagayan Valley, Cordillera, Ilocos, Bicol, Samar and Leyte.

Scientists regard Makiling as "one of the best-known biological areas in the Philippines," David explains, adding that FAO is only the latest of international bodies to recognize that record.

"Nature has an amazing God-given capacity to regenerate," Dean Umali told a UP graduating class just before his death. "The ruin and debris are soon swept away by nature's forgiveness, once the hand of man is no longer raised against her."

That's the lesson Makiling's "gem" offers. The "restored forest" urges de Guzman and his soulmates to lower "their raised hands."

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Step backward

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE CHOICE of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as the new pope wasn't a surprise, but it still disappointed. It reminded us that Karol Wojtyla, Ratzinger's predecessor, was pretty much a fluke. The Catholic Church remains a bastion of conservatism, with occasional outbursts of liberalism. Like John Paul II, the new Pope Benedict XVI is a non-Italian, the second time it's happened in the last half-millennium. Unlike John Paul II, Benedict XVI is a traditionalist, the former head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, the direct descendant of the Inquisition. Like John Paul II, he has waved an olive branch at other faiths, notably the Jewish one. Unlike John Paul II, he owes the Jews a personal debt not just as a latter-day Inquisitor but as a former member of the Hitler Youth.

I was half-hoping a miracle would happen, and Oscar Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga, archbishop of Honduras and head of the federation of Latin American bishops, would step into Peter's shoes. Like John Paul II, he has been a beacon of ecumenism and a harsh critic of the kind of globalization purveyed by the World Trade Organization, which has taken its toll on the Latin American poor. "Justice," he has said, "will have to be the agenda for the 21st century in all the countries of Latin America. Many times justice comes only for people who are rich. The poor have no right to have justice."

He would have made a perfect successor to John Paul II, extending his views on the world, enlarging the scope of peace and morality with the animating force of social justice. Alas, he never had a chance, the cardinals preferring to take several steps backward after John Paul II had taken a vast stride forward. Well, I've never believed that papal elections were suffused by divine guidance or infallible wisdom. They're pretty much governed by human frailty and political foible.

Many commentators have said the choice of Ratzinger, a stout antagonist of the theological directions of the Latin-American clergy, is meant to address the Church's growing alarm over the spread of Islam in the world (it's the fastest growing religion in Europe). But I don't know if the spread of Islam can be checked with renewed emphasis on dogma, to keep the faithful faithful, accompanied by aggressive proselytizing to increase their ranks. Indeed, I don't know, if that is the basis for Ratzinger's choice, if it will make the world a better place to live in.

It's not just the growing migrant population of Europe that is giving Islam renewed energy. It is also a widespread perception that Christianity is the oppressor's religion and Islam that of the oppressed. It's an idea that well before the 21st century caught the imagination of the black community in the United States, turning many of its prominent figures, chief of them athletes, into Muslims. Lest we forget, the great Muhammad Ali was once upon a time Cassius Clay and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was Lew Alcindor. They forsook their "slave names" along with their religion and embraced Islam for their racial liberation as much as for their personal salvation.

Consigning ecumenism to the back burner—a threat Ratizinger poses notwithstanding his invitations to a "sincere dialogue" with other faiths—will be a step backward. Pope John Paul II gave Catholicism a good name by being truly catholic, by de-emphasizing religious superiority and exclusivity, and dwelling instead on the common human striving for goodness and nobility, whether that reposed in the heart of Christian or Muslim, believer or non-believer. He didn't just say he wanted dialogue, he reached out to other faiths, saying explicitly their followers were welcomed by heaven too. He showed that morality didn't lie in being pious, it lay in being decent. He showed that being saved didn't lie in what one believed, it lay in how one lived.

Checking the spread of Islam in Europe carries with it the implicit suggestion that it will also check the spread of terrorism, Islam being the fountainhead of it. That is idiotic. The problem does not lie in Islam, it lies in fundamentalism, which is a problem not just of Islam but of Christianity as well. John Paul II had good reason to apologize for the mountain of bleached bones that has been raised as an altar to Christ over the last two millennia. You are apt to find just as many terrorists among fundamentalist Christians as among fundamentalist Muslims. You need not look very far, the White House is crawling with them. State terrorism is as much an obscenity as the free-enterprise one. Invading a country on the belief that God commands it is just as abhorrent as razing down two towers on the belief that Allah commands it.

John Paul II did spend his papacy trying to point out that if there is a division in this world, it is not between Christian and Muslim, believer and non-believer, it is between fanatic and reasonable, death-dealing and life-affirming. It is between those who believe that human beings are bound by a common plight and destiny and those who believe that those who are not for them are against them. It is between those who believe that the world is all the more splendorous for its variety and difference and those who believe the world can only be made safe with homogeneity and uniformity, especially under the hegemonic rule of one superpower. It is between those who believe that life is precious and war should be avoided like the plague and those who believe that God imperiously commands the destruction of infidels, the child being clutched by his mother during a bombing not being flesh-and-blood anyway but Satan's spawn.

The new Pope wants to check the spread of anything, he should check the spread of the worship of the modern-day Baal, the god of gold and greed.

Reassuring

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE INQUIRER editorial last Sunday mentioned speculations that the brutal attack on a family of Filipino tourists by a 25-year-old Chinese in the very crowded Tiananmen Square in the heart of Beijing may have been the "unexpected consequence" of the anti-Japanese protests sweeping China in the past few weeks. Emmanuel Madrigal and his daughter Regina Mia were part of a group of Filipino tourists, when they were suddenly attacked by the Chinese assailant. They were wounded so badly that within an hour they were both dead. Madrigal's wife Vivian was also hurt but reports say she is already out of danger, although she has to remain for a while in a Beijing hospital to recuperate. Two other daughters escaped injury, thank God.

* * *

The theory that it could have been an anti-Japanese sentiment that triggered the attacks stems from the fact that the Filipino victims looked like Japanese, with their fair complexion and their eyes. The editorial noted the assailant's use of a samurai sword. Friends of the victims in Ayala Alabang told me that apparently the assailant was very well versed in the use of that weapon. They also say the attacks happened so swiftly that the rest of the tour group never realized what happened, until the victims collapsed on the square.

* * *

The picture of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Chinese President Hu Jintao intently talking to each other just before the start of the Asian-African leaders' gathering in Jakarta last week was quite reassuring. Whether the strain in relations between the two countries stemming from bitter animosities stirred during the war years could be mended remains to be seen, but for the moment, any reassurance that it would not worsen and turn violent is good enough. Hu Jintao is visiting Manila this week, and as the editorial said, he can expect hard questions from the local media about the tragedy on Tiananmen Square.

* * *

Yesterday I wrote about the miracle produced by Sta. Patrizia for the Speaker's wife, Gina de Venecia. During a visit to the shrine of this saint who lived 1,600 years ago in Naples, Italy, Gina had requested her to give her a sign that her daughter KC, who perished in a terrible fire in their home last Dec. 16, is now happy with God. The saint obliged and in full view of the small group of Filipinos her blood liquefied, reducing the visitors, including Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman, to tears. Gina left the convent at peace with herself and more determined to help mothers who have similarly lost an offspring.

* * *

Gina and actress Ali Sotto, who had earlier lost a son in an accident, have formed a group called "Inang Naulila sa Anak" (INA) that would counsel grieving mothers. Joining them as legal counsel is Lorna Kapunan, who lost an eight-year-old son to leukemia years back. Dr. Honey Carandang, a psychiatrist who has been counseling Gina in the past few months, will serve as adviser. But perhaps as important, there will be a DSWD component: with the help of Assistant Secretary Alice Bala, INA will train grief counselors to help mothers who lost their children in natural calamities, mainly from the oft-neglected sectors of society.

* * *

Last Friday evening, Gina was at the intensive care unit of Cardinal Santos Hospital, bringing relics from Pope John II and St. Padre Pio to Rep. Ben-Hur Abalos and his wife Menchi, as their daughter Chiara lay dying from a deadly viral infection. Over the past few days, she and Ali have provided comfort and strength to Menchi, who is still in great shock over her daughter's death. "Suddenly, I realized I was already strong enough to do it," Gina says. Truly, God works in strange ways.

With the Catholic Church very much in the news because of the recent events in Rome, perhaps it's relevant to bring to the readers' attention a book that was reprinted last December 2004 in time for the Eucharistic-Marian Year proclamation of the late Pope John Paul II. The book, "Cry, Beloved Mother Church, Rejoice!" which was first printed on the Feast of Pentecost in 1987, was written by former UP humanities professor Josefina D. Constantino who earned her master's degree from Columbia University and took a humanities course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Constantino lived two-thirds of her life as a layperson, professor and columnist, but for the past over 35 years, she has been known as Sr. Teresa Joseph Patrick of the Carmelites.

* * *

Sr. Teresa unabashedly says that her book, written under her pen name, Susana Jose, is "a book for laymen and laywomen," not for scholars and theologians. It chronicles her spiritual odyssey, her "journey of faith, hope and love" from a layperson wrapped up with the world to one who is dedicated entirely to the Lord and service to the Church behind convent walls. Above all, it's a personal testament of her love for and loyalty to the Church. The book's format consists of eight long personal letters addressed to JPII, Dr. Jose Rizal, Fr. James Moran, S.J. (her longtime spiritual adviser), St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, the American feminists of the 1970s and a few other personalities. In those letters, Sr. Teresa narrates her personal odyssey through common everyday events—incidents in one's life that can go unnoticed—as the very material God uses to transform a soul into His own image.

* * *

Sr. Teresa's book can serve as source of daily meditation. It's available at P200 a copy at the Carmelite Monastery of St. Therese at 4 Gilmore Ave., Quezon City. If you call in advance (tel. 724-2990 and 755-4335), you can reserve copies and even have them autographed by Sr. Teresa. Proceeds from the book will go to the hospitalization and maintenance needs of the sisters at Carmel Gilmore. They are saying *Deo gratias* in advance.

People and resources

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE WORLD celebrated "Earth Day" last Saturday, occasioning a blizzard of activities from environmental clean-ups to bikathons, tree planting picnics and even an "alternative" fashion show hosted by native organic fiber pioneer Dita Sandico-Ong at Earthhaven, an environmental retreat in the hills of San Mateo. (My apologies for missing the event, I had a deadline to meet!)

The event also prompted Population Action International to release new data on the links between human population and the state of critical natural resources. The data, says PAI, "demonstrates two key trends." These are:

- Human pressure on renewable freshwater, cropland, forests, fisheries and the atmosphere is unprecedented and continually increasing.
- Recent declines in human fertility already have slowed the pace of this increase, providing hope that human pressure on the environment eventually will peak and then subside.

Human civilization, as the new data make clear, is not sustainable today. "Despite a growing global economy and generally adequate energy and food supplies, most of the renewable natural resources most important to human life show dramatic signs of loss, scarcity or ill health as growing human populations compete for finite supplies of each resource."

But the second trend, says PAI, "offers a rare glimmer of hope that human civilization may one day become truly sustainable." "The prospect for environmental sustainability is bright," the study asserts. "It is hard to imagine any other single feasible or likely future development that would contribute more than a peak in population to resolving the entire range of environmental problems that humanity faces."

* * *

THE PAI study cautions, though, that "both population growth rates and density are more varied than ever before," and so, too, are the ratios of availability of critical natural resources to people in different countries. "In some regions—notably in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia—large families and early pregnancies provide strong momentum for population growth that could continue for generations to come."

I decided to check out the country-specific data and found out that for the Philippines, at least, population growth is translating into sharply reduced availability of crucial natural resources. Our population in 1975 was 42 million and is now estimated at 82 million. By 2025, estimates of our national population range from a low of 100.18 million to a high of 117 million.

In 1975, the per capita amount of renewable water was 11,399 cubic meters. This went down to 6,326 in 2000 and down further to 5,784 today. By 2025, the amount of renewable water available to every Filipino could go down to as low as 4,091 cubic meters.

The same pattern of diminishing availability holds for arable land. The amount of available arable land per capita in 1975 was 0.20 hectares, and that is down to 0.13 hectares today. By 2025, that amount could fall to as low as 0.09 hectares.

* * *

FOR purposes of comparison, I checked out the data for Thailand, which is a good choice because Thailand and the Philippines are about the same size in terms of land area and, in 1975 had about the same population size and were in the same stage of development.

In 1975, Thailand's population stood at 41 million and is now estimated at 64 million, 18 million less than ours. By 2025, at its present low population growth rate, Thailand's estimated population is expected to fall between 67.9 and 79.9 million, about 20 million less than ours would be.

In 1975, the per capita amount of renewable water in Thailand was estimated at 9,920 cubic meters, down to 6,720 in 2000 and slightly lower to 6,390 today. As for arable land per capita, that stood at 0.40 in 1975, and went down to 0.29 today. By 2025, that amount could fall to as low as 0.23 hectares.

The picture may look bright for the world at large, but if we don't move much faster—to slow our population growth rate and protect our environment—than we have in the previous decades, then the ratio between population and natural resources can only grow worse, while our neighbors continue to enjoy the fruits of a stable population that makes sustainable growth and development possible.

* * *

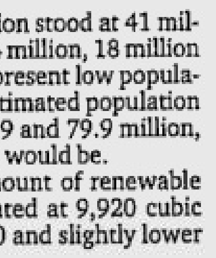
OOPS! In my column published last April 17, on "Condoms and the Church," mention was made of Africa as the place where "two-thirds of AIDS carriers in the world reside."

When I saw the term "AIDS carriers" I was aghast and embarrassed, knowing that "AIDS carriers" is a particularly reprehensible term for persons living with HIV/AIDS. I did use the preferred term "persons living with HIV/AIDS," but this had been changed, mainly for space-saving purposes. Just to let the public know, "persons living with HIV/AIDS" is preferable because first, it identifies individuals who have tested positive for HIV as "persons," and second, it portrays them as "living with" a disease, and not "dying of" one.

In another column published last April 24 on "Buying Tingi," I mentioned possible ways to overcome the disadvantages in the poor's *tingi* or micro-retail buying habits, including "buying from cooperatives and coop stores." Actually, the term I used was "buying cooperatives," meaning groups of people organized into cooperatives who buy goods in bulk, bypassing middle-men and retailers, and thereby enjoying considerable savings.

In the column "Halo-halo Memories" that appeared last April 23, I made a parenthetical reference to "alliteration" on a halo-halo chain putting up "stalls in fastfood halls of SM malls." A reader corrected me and said what I had written was a "rhyme" and not an alliteration, which is a series of words that share the same first letter. I stand corrected.

And the Buddha smiled



SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

> *"Look straight ahead, neither to the left nor to the right. His dust remains but he has passed into infinity."*—Rumi

THERE are two great complexes of temples in Southeast Asia, one at Bagan in Burma and the other at Angkor Wat in Cambodia. For those of us who continue to see what greed can do to ancient monuments and artifacts, the most horrifying is the manner by which thieves have loped off the heads of statues to grace some collector's residence in New York or Paris or London. It's the same principle underlying the theft of ecclesiastical art in this country—you steal them and we'll buy it. But it's still painful to see: to have survived hundreds of years only to vanish in a second and be forever lost to a people's heritage.

The temples of Angkor, over a hundred of them, built over a thousand years ago represent the zenith of the Khmer empire where the kings ruled over a kingdom that reached present day Vietnam to Yunan in China. The palaces and houses of the people long ago decayed and withered away but the religious buildings remain.

Angkor Wat (Thai name for temple) is the largest in the complex, built by Suryavarma to honor the god Vishnu and to serve as the king's final burial grounds. I can't tell you that it's my favorite temple because it isn't. For that I'd say Hatsheput's mortuary temple cut into the rock and known to ancient Egyptians as Djeser-djeseru, the "sacred of sacreds." And for sheer awesomeness, I don't think you can beat Abu Simbel. There's also John Lateran which isn't even that old but all that green marble is like walking into an emerald. As you can see, this is all purely subjective.

Angkor has astonishingly beautiful sculpture, ribbed cupolas, and it's difficult if not impossible to communicate its size and perfect proportions. It sits surrounded by a moat which some archaeologists believe was related to an irrigation system but which others think was built purely for aesthetic reasons. The former reason has great appeal: building this huge lake (almost a square mile in area) only because you believe it adds to the beauty of a structure. You thus have to approach the palace city through a long causeway (so long in fact that, in the heat of summer, by the time you get to the main door you want to sit under the nearest shade tree, drink a gallon of ice water and preferably stay inert the rest of the day). There are sprawling courtyards, elevated towers, covered galleries, chambers and porches on different levels. Its sheer size is awesome. It is said that it is a replica of the universe in stone and represents an earthly model of the cosmic world, but that may just be the interpretation of some scholarly archaeologist.

There are five towers and the central one represents the mythical Mount Meru, situated at the center of the universe. The five towers represent the mountain's five peaks, the outer walls the edge of the world and the surrounding moat the oceans beyond. It is difficult to believe that all this was done in a period of 30 years even granting slave labor because the sculpture is so superb.

There was a gallery of 1,000 Buddhas but I don't have to tell you what happened to them. Suffice it to say that very few remain today. There are also 1,500 sculptures of apsaras (celestial dancers) whose figures are as luscious today as they must have been a thousand years ago. A Cambodian poet in the 17th century got so carried away that he wrote that they were "living, lovely, breathing women!"

The Thais sacked Angkor in the 15th century and the Khmers abandoned the city shortly after. It was ancient Buddhist monks who brought back stories about a "lost city" built by the gods, and eventually adventurous Europeans traveled in search of these ruins. Beginning in 1908, the French began restoration work and today the Japanese, Koreans and Americans are all involved in the work. In 1992, Angkor was listed among Unesco World Heritage sites. (By the way, we have four churches on that list, one of which the parish priest wishes to de-list not aware perhaps that such inclusion is a recognition of the site "as one of mankind's most significant cultural heritage sites" and should serve as a source of pride to the people. Another priest couldn't understand either that being on that list means you must comply with conservation principles and promptly built a new crenellated sacristy attached to the church, changing its entire aspect. Needless to say, he had his bishop's approval.)

Angkor took the whole day to visit, and there was Angkor Thom the following day. This was the last capital of the Khmers and served as the religious and administrative center. It's easy to believe that it was grander than any European capital of the time (end of the 12th century). Truly to walk along the Bayon, the terrace of the elephants, the terrace of the Leper King is to marvel at the creativeness of these ancient people.

Let me just tell you though that after trudging (by this time my energy level had flagged to about zero) through Preah Khan, Ta Prohm where magnificent trees twine themselves among the stones and Banteay Srei, there was nothing like returning to our hotel, covered in dust and sweaty, and collapsing on the bed. It helped that the Sofitel had this enormous bath and the room opened into a lagoon covered with lotus, shaded by large trees. There was a wonderful buffet for brunch and a great market for antiques, if you know what you're doing, but we were all taken aback at having to pay $25 airport tax on our way out. Especially since the airport was nothing to write home about.

The final frontier?

YOUNG BLOOD

Rolly Jude M. Ortega

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

"IS it still far?" I asked my cousin in Ilonggo, our native tongue. The weight of my knapsack was bearing down on my body.

She grinned and answered, "We're almost there. After the hill is our house."

I was exasperated. She had been saying the same thing for almost an hour and I couldn't tell which hill she was referring to. We had been climbing hill after hill. I had forgotten that their home was that far from the highway, because the only time I'd been there was 10 years earlier and we rode carabaos then.

To keep my exhausted feet moving, I thought of how wonderful our vacation would be: nature tripping, bonding with kith and kin, and knowing more about the fascinating culture of the Manobos of Sultan Kudarat.

"There it is," my seemingly tireless companion said after we reached the top of the nth hill. I looked where she was pointing and was surprised by the scenery. "Where are the trees?" I inquired.

Their simple wooden house lay amidst rolling cornfields. Corn in different stages of planting and cultivation were all you could see from their place, which is aptly called Manlod (the Manobo word for hilly), up to the Celebes Sea in the west and the mountain ranges.

My cousin had continued walking and didn't hear my question. But she didn't have to answer. I already knew.

When other people heard about the rich land my uncle had found, they moved into the area and cleared the forest by *kaingin*. This was the only way of farming they had known for generations.

Corn grows robustly on forest soil, but the nutrients are used up after a decade of farming or so. At this point, the farmers are left with two choices: to continue planting in the area and use expensive fertilizers or look for a new area to be cleared in the forest. If they choose the first one at the risk of ending up even poorer, their children will eventually clear the forest. When a farmer's children grow up, only one of them can take over the farm because five hectares yield barely enough to feed a family of five. The other children—and there are often many of them because the farmers consider children a blessing—have to look for their own farms.

Instead of the jungle life I wanted to experience I had to settle for a farm life. And I had fun nonetheless. In the foggy mornings, my cousins and I would warm our stomach with bitter native coffee. At night, we removed the corn from the husk with our hands under the light of a kerosene lamp. We spent most of daytime talking about the forest: the flock of *kalaw* (hornbills) that would wake them up at four in the morning during breeding season, the rare orchids that fetched up to P5,000 in Davao City, and the magnificent waterfall that I shouldn't fail to see. Too bad, only the waterfall remained.

My uncle's adventures were most interesting. He used to hunt deer and bring the meat for dinner. Once he killed a very long python. But now he has retired, partly because he's not getting any younger and partly because there are no more animals to hunt. When our conversation lagged, we would listen to dramas in the vernacular on the battery-operated radio.

On the third day of my visit, we went to the waterfall that they were so proud of. On the way, we passed through a Manobo community just a few kilometers from my uncle's house. What used to be bamboo-and-cogon houses now had wood for walls. The Manobos still chewed betel nut and wore dangling bronze earrings, but clothes bought from some *ukay-ukay* had replaced their brightly colored traditional garb.

Not far from the village was the waterfall. The sight was truly breathtaking as the waterfall seemed to surpass Ma. Christina Falls both in height and beauty. It had survived the invasion of people because nature saw to it that it was strategically located. We had to climb down a very steep slope for some 40 minutes to get there. People cannot farm in such a steep area.

But I knew people would soon find ways to exploit the last haven of wild animals. I wouldn't be surprised if 10 years from now, the waterfall will just be another *turugban*, a bathing place for carabaos.

On our way home, my companions saw two hornbills perched on a tree. But even before I could catch a glimpse of them, they flew away, leaving just the sounds of their cawing.

We also chanced upon the tracks of a wild sow and her litter. That was my closest brush with wild animals.

The wildlife of Sultan Kudarat is on the brink of extinction. In just a matter of a few decades, people have ravaged the once vast rainforest.

When people from the Visayas and Luzon began migrating to the mountainous parts of Southern Mindanao, the Manobos sold their lands and settled in the forest where they could hunt and gather food. As the population of the Christians grew, the Manobos sold more of their ancestral domain and retreated deeper into the jungle. This is why most of the barangays in the hinterlands of the province have Manobo names such as Basag (stream), Tacupis (cave) and Kulaman (valley) although their present inhabitants are Ilonggos, Cebuanos and Ilocanos.

Today, there's no more forest for the lumad to retreat to. The Manobos have no choice but cohabit with the Christians. They have learned to sow seeds since what nature provides no longer suffices even just for sustenance. The natives also work in the cornfields and are paid daily wages.

The rapid changes taking place in Manlod bothered me. People should take care of the natural resources, I thought. But I quickly realized that if they did so, they would starve to death. Those farmers and the Manobos want a healthy, green environment as much as members of some well-known save-the-earth organizations. But people living in remote areas have to make difficult choices: Flora or corn? Save the deer or their children?

People in highly urbanized areas whine that their cities are being choked by modernity. They think people in the boondocks lives simpler lives and have fewer worries.

I thought the same way when I decided to spend a few days in my uncle's place. But as I left on a six-wheeler truck bringing their harvest to town over muddy roads, I realized that life anywhere in this country is essentially the same. We have to struggle for survival. We have to cope with changes. We have to face the ills of our society: the press of an expanding population, the destruction of nature, our vanishing culture, poor governance, and so many hungry stomachs.

Rolly Jude M. Ortega, 19, is a BS electronics and communications engineering student at Notre Dame of Marbel University in Koronadal City.

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Are we drifting towards fascism?

THE UNABATED killings of journalists and newscasters have placed the Philippines in the international map as a killing field for media practitioners. If we look at statistics, however, mass leaders espousing alternative politics, like those coming from Anakpawis, Bayan Muna, Gabriela party-lists, are also in the hit list. And worse, human rights lawyers appear to have been added to the list, as well.

First to be martyred was lawyer Jovy Magsino, vice mayor of Naujan, Mindoro and a prominent human rights lawyer who had strongly opposed the militarization of her province. After a lull, came the botched assassination attempt last March 3 on lawyer Romeo Capulong, who is an internationally renowned human rights lawyer whose three decades of human rights work in the country is a tough act to follow. Ten days later came the fatal ambush in Tacloban City of lawyer Fidelito Dacut, long-time defender of human rights victims in the Leyte-Samar area. Some two weeks later saw the ambush of lawyer Charles Juloya, an energetic human rights lawyer in Northern Luzon, who miraculously survived the six wounds that he suffered.

As if an omen of more dreadful things to come, the military recently admitted the inclusion of the Free Legal Assistance Group, the oldest and largest organization of human rights lawyers in the country, in its list of communist-influenced organizations.

The role which human rights lawyers, or all lawyers for that matter, play in the judicial system of democratic societies is vital. As officers of the court, they are indispensable to due process upon which the judicial system is based. A lawyer who represents a robber does not himself become a robber; a lawyer who appears for a rapist does not himself become a rapist; in the same manner that a lawyer who represents a rebel does not become a rebel. Guilt by association has never been the rule in democratic settings. Otherwise, we would run out of lawyers to represent those with unpopular causes, and the system would cease to work.

But in a country falling for the trappings of a fascist system, this distinction is conveniently ignored. The perceived guilt of the client is also vested upon his counsel. Accordingly, a lawyer who represents a rebel espousing political views contrary to those being promoted by the government is viewed as a rebel as well, becoming fair game for physical elimination by the rabid defenders of the existing order.

Is the Philippines drifting toward fascist rule? Not even during the dark days of martial rule have such killings of officers of the court been undertaken so boldly and with seeming impunity. President Macapagal-Arroyo's silence on the matter has not helped. But if the answer is in the affirmative, then it becomes incumbent upon all, lawyers and the broad masses alike, to stop this country from going into such a wretched state.

—REMIGIO D. SALADERO JR.,
Pro-Labor Legal Assistance Center,
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Quezon City

A step in the right direction

GRAFT and corruption is so rampant, especially in government service, that it has become a way of life.

It seems that people have accepted that it is an exercise in futility to fight irregularities in government, such that a culture of corruption has pervaded Philippine society.

This deplorable condition exists despite the fact that the Constitution provides that "public office is a public trust" and that "public officers and employees must at all time be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty and efficiency, act with patriotism and justice, practice and lead modest lives."

Other provisions in the Constitution mandate that government workers must avoid committing graft and corruption. Add to these are laws that deal with the prevention of graft and corruption, among them the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, and the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

Aside from these, there are provisions in the Revised Penal Code which spell out acts of graft and corruption and the corresponding penalties for the offenders (Articles 203-222) .

In spite of these constitutional and legal provisions, graft and corruption persists. However, we should not lose hope. The inculcation and development of moral values among our people may yet be an effective deterrent against graft and corruption.

Moral values strengthen the character of individuals and would therefore be able to ward off the temptations of acquiring wealth and other material things through fraudulent means.

In this regard, we believe that the creation of the Presidential Commission on Values Formation is a step in the right direction.

—EUSEBIO S. SAN DIEGO
president,
National Organization of Professional Teachers Inc.-
National Capital Region
22 Antonia St., Centerville,
Tandang Sora, Quezon City

God's creatures, too

JUST hours after Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was named Pope Benedict XVI, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) offered congratulations and urged His Holiness to include animals in the Catholic Church's areas of concern.

The new Pope has spoken movingly about the exploitation of all beings, particularly of farm animals. When he was asked about the rights of animals in a 2002 interview, he said, "That is a very serious question. At any rate, we can see that they are given into our care, that we cannot just do whatever we want with them. Animals, too, are God's creatures ... Certainly, a sort of industrial use of creatures, so that geese are fed in such a way as to produce as large a liver as possible, or hens live so packed together that they become just caricatures of birds, this degrading of living creatures to a commodity seems to me in fact to contradict the relationship of mutuality that comes across in the Bible."

Cardinal Ratzinger was echoing official Church teachings, as laid out in the Catholic Catechism, which states clearly that "Animals are God's creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence, they bless Him and give Him glory. Thus men owe them kindness. We should recall the gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Philip Neri treated animals... It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly."

In a letter sent to him today, we asked His Holiness to bring his own compassionate vision to the public: "We hope that you will continue to speak out for these exploited beings. In recent years, our membership has swelled with [Catholics] who believe that animals, like people, have a sacred right to life and need to be protected from violence ... We turn to you now, as you take on your momentous duties, and humbly ask that you lead the way into a new era of compassion and respect for all beings, regardless of species."

Compassion for animals was also a prominent theme in John Paul II's papacy. Pope John Paul proclaimed that "the animals possess a soul and men must love and feel solidarity with our smaller brethren." He went on to say that all animals are "fruit of the creative action of the Holy Spirit and merit respect" and that they are "as near to God as men are."

Peta is hopeful that Pope Benedict XVI will continue to speak out for animals in his papacy as he did as a cardinal, and that he will take a stand against the hideous treatment endured by God's creatures. Catholics can honor the teachings of Pope John Paul II and the sentiments of Pope Benedict XVI by incorporating compassion for animals more fully into their own lives.

—SONIA ASTUDILLO,
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PMAP supports four-day work week

THE PERSONNEL Management Association of the Philippines, a national organization of human resource executives, commends the government's bold and radical program, "Compressed Work Week."

"Compressed Work Week" allows employees to work beyond eight hours a day, without overtime pay, provided they do not exceed the regular number of work hours a week.

The government has challenged the private sector to seriously consider adopting the program, thus eliciting mixed reactions from different sectors of society.

For instance, from a purely legal viewpoint, the program is a violation of a Labor Code provision. For private entities, this is a major issue.

From the financial angle, it is true that both the government and its employees stand to save substantial amount of money from this energy conservation program. But some businessmen are quick to point out that implementing the program may even be more burdensome for business.

Nevertheless, even if this program were made legal and proven to be cost-effective, resistance will still be there because the program violates our deeply entrenched 5-day-work-week paradigm, as well as our 8-hour-a-day-work paradigm, which we have held so dearly for more than 200 years.

The "Compressed Work Week" program is not just an energy conservation program but a significant and meaningful government gesture challenging outdated paradigms. Indeed, we have to open ourselves up to new ideas if we have to move forward as a country.

Compressed work week, just like "flexi-time," is an example of a program that falls under the umbrella concept of "alternative office arrangements." Alternative office arrangements are the new solutions to new problems. They help our organizations and nation adapt to our fast changing environment.

We urge private organizations to explore the value of compressed work week and other alternative work arrangements in search of ways of competing in the new economy.

To repeat, we commend the national government for coming up with the "Compressed Work Week" program. The same bold and challenging spirit behind it should guide all of us in rebuilding our institutions and our beloved country as we reclaim our rightful place in the community of nations.

—LINA ASENETA,
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Personnel Management Association of the Philippines,
670 Lee St., Addition Hills,
Mandaluyong City

Indicators of moral bankruptcy

THE EDITORIAL "Friday the 13th" (PDI, 4/11/05) pointed out that President Macapagal-Arroyo was caught in another outright lie when she claimed that her decision to resign as vice president during the Estrada presidency was made up after her Oct. 13, 2001 meeting with the late Pope.

Then, of course, her October 2003 decision to run in the May 10, 2004 elections only confirmed her December 2002 announcement (that she won't run for president) was a big lie. Like a thief, GMA kept her seat in Malacañang through massive malversation of public funds, fraud and violence in the 2004 elections.

But here is the truth that GMA cannot escape: Her approval ratings continue to go down as the Filipino people see her moral bankruptcy behind her claims of religiosity and supposedly her getting the "blessings" of Church leaders for her political decisions.

GMA projects an image of a devout Catholic while her police and military agents beat and arrest church leaders and kill priests like Fr. William Tadena who actively supported the striking workers of Hacienda Luisita. She is just like US President George W. Bush, who uses Christian phraseology to justify the invasion of Iraq and other acts of intervention and aggression in the name of the "war on terror."

GMA has no moral ascendancy to rule as she continues to lie and betray the people's aspirations for good governance, justice and meaningful change. The people are certainly dismayed and outraged over a corrupt government which promises to bring economic progress but fails in granting substantial wage hikes and in stopping business giants, such as oil, power and water companies, from overpricing.

GMA's perennial lies and self-serving policies clearly manifest in the worsening socio-economic, political and moral crisis in the country. She wanted to please the US government so much that, unlike the Pope and other church leaders around the world who called for peace, she supported the brutal US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and welcomed the return of US military presence in the Philippines—all in the name of the US war on terror.

GMA lied about bringing about peace as we continue to witness massive civilian displacement, brutal killings and human rights violations in the face of the continuing war and escalating political repression in Mindanao, Southern Tagalog, Central Luzon and across.

—AMIE DURAL
Secretary General,
Promotion of Church People's Response
NCCP Compound
879 Edsa, Quezon City

Crossing over through the Net

AS I was browsing through the INQUIRER, I remember that Fr. Jerry Orbos has a column in the newspaper every Sunday. So, I had to browse again, this time through the archives and I came across his column titled "Crossing over" (PDI, 3/27/05).

I guess this is the perfect time to tell Father Jerry that I just miss hearing his Masses; his stories just inspire me all the time. My husband and I used to go attend Masses every Sunday in Christ the King Church just to relax and hear your homilies. But since we moved here to New Jersey two Novembers ago, I could only reminisce about those funny inspiring stories from you. You just don't know how I wish priests here would have Father Orbos' sense of humor.

Frankly, I am very homesick for the food, place and people there, and Father Jerry is one of those that I miss hearing every Sunday.

Thank God for the INQUIRER being in the Internet, we now have you "crossing over" to those who are far away. I hope when Father Jerry gets the chance to come and visit the United States, he will let me know so my husband and I can attend whatever activities he will be holding here. I could only hope I was back home, life was simple then but fruitful.

—ARLENE,
arraym13@hotmail.com

Two lives

CONGRATULATIONS! The INQUIRER is truly living up to its slogan of presenting balanced news and fearless views. The Sunday "Talk of The Town" page indeed gives the readers a wide range of opinions and views from different sectors of society for various and interesting topics. You have presented different opinions on the VAT, Mining Act, House Bills and Ligtas Buntis.

In Sunday's INQUIRER articles "John Paul II on family and women," lawyer Rhodora M. Roy-Raterta and Rey Carmelo Remonde of the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines asked: "Has he failed to cross the threshold of hope for women?" (PDI, 4/10/05) and described him as full of contradictions.

I would like to inform the writers that the Holy Father Pope John Paul II did not canonize a woman who died at childbirth. Her story should not be used to shock people into thinking that the Holy Father was not concerned about women's desperate situations.

The name of the woman he canonized last year is Gianna Beretta Molla who died of cancer, not because of childbirth. She was an Italian pediatrician who chose to continue her pregnancy. She did undergo removal of the uterine tumor and had enough medical supervision until she gave birth to her child. She knew very well the progress of her cancer, that even with chemotherapy, she would not live long. She died on April 28, 1962.

The baby girl, Gianna Emmanuela, was raised by her father and three siblings. She took up medicine and became a physician like her mother. She and the whole family received the Plaque of Beatification from the hands of Pope John Paul II. Emmanuela spoke during the beatification—"Dear mom, thank you for giving me life two times—when I was conceived and when you permitted me to be born. My life seeks to be the natural continuation of your life, of your joy, of your living, of your enthusiasm."

This is the challenge of Christianity—"Greater love than this no one has than to lay down one's life for another." His Holiness, being a moral theologian, knew very well the bioethical implications of the situation of St. Gianna. Writers should check their facts first before using stories to drive home their point.

—SR. PILAR VERZOSA, RGS,
Pro-Life Philippines,
1043 Aurora Blvd.,
Quezon City

InqBox

Do you support the transport strike by jeepney operators who are pushing for a fare hike because of increasing fuel prices?

Yes, i support the transport groups. They are only gasping for additional "oxygen"; before they get totally suffocated.
—Christine Ramones, *makati city*

nope... dinadamay nila pati gusto maghanapbuhay -->nuff said (-_-)
—Cristina Naguit, *Makati*

A dialogue, be it noisy or rational, wud have bin more appropriate rather than a strike.
—Greg S.Quimpo, *Pasig City*

it is difficult 4 d commuters to support d cause of d jeep operators. What shud b done is 2 lower d oil prices & amend d law on oil prices..
—simon Ibarra, *qc*

Yes, we support the strikers. They just want a transport fare hike because of high fuel prices. They are working for a just cause.
—Arnold Lim, *Manila*

All, including private vehicles, shld join d strike 2 quell capitalist greed, also called "freedom" by Bush n other Western double-speakers.
—rene locsin, *QC*

NO! coz its not a win-win solution 2 both parties. D number of injured & even death after, is not an excuse for a centavo gained.
—Edgardo Malayang, *Makati*

NO. resources i.e. time, energy and effort are wasted in that day alone. Why not win-win solution? kaya ng pinoy yan!
—bong hagacer, *ilocos sur*

sure i got home early, no traffic e. Mayb dey shud lessen d jeepneys on the road. It made service faster.
—Mary Ann Sanchez, *Calamba City*

NO! Pasakay muna sila ng libre pra makabawi ang comuters.
—Joel Quintela, *Tagum City*

dapat sukat muna distance ng ruta kc merOn ruta less than 4 km, tama ba taas din pasahe nla?
—rufino sanchez, *caloocan*

Ang taas kasing presyo ng krudo!?

no, transport strike means stopping people to work and it adds burden to our economy.
—beverly varquez, *bacolod city*

Hindi! maraming nandadaya sa sukli at pahirap pa sa mga commuters sa trip-cutting nila.
—sherwin preclaro, *parañaque*

No. It never worked before dats why its never a solution. Dey r already part of d problem.
—Rose Dee, *Marikina City*

di ako suporta kc kawawa lang workers lalo na ang mga CONTRACTUAL na WALANG POWER. Dapat IPAGLABAN nila IBABA PRESYO ng LANGIS..
—Louie Lachica, *Manila*

Yes, I support their cause, they are just fighting for fare hikes because of expensive fuel and expensive spare parts. Let's help naman these poor jeepney drivers.
—Celia Santos, *Quezon City*

NO! Fare hike will just b a burden 2 d poor pipol. Solution: nationalization & regulation of d oil industry.
—David Michael San Juan, *Malolos*

Do you think Susan Roces would make a good leader for the opposition? Why or why not?

NO. Susan Roces would be a big help, if she stays as a humble homemaker. Leadership doesn't come with age and popularity.
—cheridine oro, *marikina*

Susan as a prop n puppet is gud 4d opposition. She shld watch out 4 her purse tho.
—rene locsin, *QC*

YES, because she has POTENTIAL as a LEADER.
—Julie Jalilul, *Bongao, tawi-tawi*

I guess she wouldn't make a good leader bcoz SHE HAS No experience even for a councilor or even a Mayor right!
—Janette V. Magaling, *cavite city*

Seems like Susan Roces wants to copy Cory Aquino who was then able to unite the people and the opposition.
—Juan Deveraturda, *Subic, Zambales*

I don't think so, bcoz d oposition wil only use her to get d support of d pipol. kumbga front lang sya, puppet ng opposition.
—Theresa, *San Fernando City*

no, bcoz she has no experience in politics. but i believe she can unite the opposition.
—Noel madrid, *bulacan*

YES! MS. Susan Roces is better than ARROYO!
—Chona Marie Tion, *CAGAYAN de Oro city*

has strong personality & good opposition leader but not effective as a candidate.
—eligio fonacier, *comp. valley*

I THINK will be a GOOD LEADER if she WORKs WELL -- SHE has a good FIGHTING SPIRIT.
—Alexander Landicho, *Lipa city*

hindi. kailan na ba nagkaroon ng magaling na artista na pinuno? ang alam lang naman nila e publicity.
—randy agonia, *lipa city*

No, because she doesn't have the skills and experience. Many respect her for who she is but she should stay away from politics.
—Tyrone Guya, *Manila*

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Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

MILF rejects participation in ARMM polls

DATU ODIN SINSUAT, Maguindanao—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has formally rejected participation in the forthcoming Aug. 8 elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Citing as example the alleged inaction of incumbent and past officials on the plight of the Bangsamoro People, Mohammad Nassif, MILF military operations chief, told reporters here that ARMM officials are just puppets of Malacañang and that the elections would only be for show.

"Actually in the ARMM, whoever will become the leaders cannot do something because the Philippine government controls them. They are just puppets of the Palace. Whatever the Palace will dictate to them, they will do," Nassif said during a press conference held for the purpose of announcing the rejection.

Several hundred MILF fighters converged here on Saturday to denounce the elections.

Nassif said that instead of working for the welfare of the people, the ARMM has become a symbol of corruption.

He said "there are funds allotted to the ARMM but it only goes to the pockets" of most of the region's officials.

"All of you who arrived here at the camp, did you notice the road. It's up to you. I won't comment," Nassif said of the pot-holed strip that led to one of the MILF's mobile camps here.

"With due respect to the others who are sincere, the election is useless, very impractical," he said.

The ARMM covers the provinces of Maguindanao, Sulu, Lanao del Sur and Tawi-Tawi and the city of Marawi.

The region's first elected governor was Zacaria Candao of Maguindanao. He was succeeded by former Ambassador Lininding Pangandaman who hailed from Lanao del Sur. Pangandaman wanted a reelection but then President Fidel Ramos asked him to give way to erstwhile Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) chief Nur Misuari.

Misuari had just signed the 1996 peace agreement and had agreed to run for the regional elections under the administration banner.

When Misuari, a Tausug, was removed from office and an election was later held, his deputy Parouk Hussin ran and won.

For this year's election, the fifth in the autonomous region, leaders of the ARMM's four ethnic tribes pitted themselves against each other for the "much coveted" Malacañang endorsement.

In the region's election history, whoever the administration picks as its candidate always wins.

As this developed, the Commission on Elections said some candidates have already started filing their certificates of candidacy yesterday.

Lawyer Renato Magbutay, Comelec ARMM director, said the filing of the certificates of candidacy would end on April 30.

"We are in a hurry disseminating this information," he told the INQUIRER.

At least 25 positions are up for grabs, including the governorship and the vice governorship.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos has urged the Department of Budget and Management to fast-track the release of the budget for the elections "so as not to delay our preparations." *Jeoffrey Maitem and Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

3 NPA rebels killed in new Bulacan clash

SAN RAFAEL, Bulacan—At least three suspected New People's Army rebels were killed in an encounter with policemen in Barangay Coral na Bato here on Monday.

Supt. Edgar Manuel, commander of the 306th provincial police mobile group, said they received a report at 4 a.m. Monday that at least 10 armed men believed to be NPA rebels were seen in Coral na Bato.

Manuel's men went to the village and later engaged the group in a 30-minute gunfight. Manuel's team recovered two Armalite rifles and anti-government documents from the slain rebels. Their bodies were taken to the Funeraria Mendoza in Barangay Poblacion here.

Their identities have not been determined yet.

Supt. Ferdinando Sevilla, provincial police intelligence and investigation officer, said the rebels could be part of the group that attacked a police checkpoint in Barangay Sampaloc on Sunday morning. Two policemen, SPO3 Amante Puma and SPO2 Benito Deticio, were killed in that attack.

Sevilla said they were also checking reports indicating that the group that policemen engaged in Coral na Bato was part of the NPA unit that Army soldiers had encountered in San Miguel town on Sunday dawn.

He said their reports showed that the rebels retreated toward Barangay Coral na Bato in San Rafael, about 30 km from San Miguel.

At least six rebels were killed in the San Miguel encounter on Sunday.

Communist guerrillas have been waging a Marxist revolution for more than 20 years, getting their recruits mostly from impoverished rural communities. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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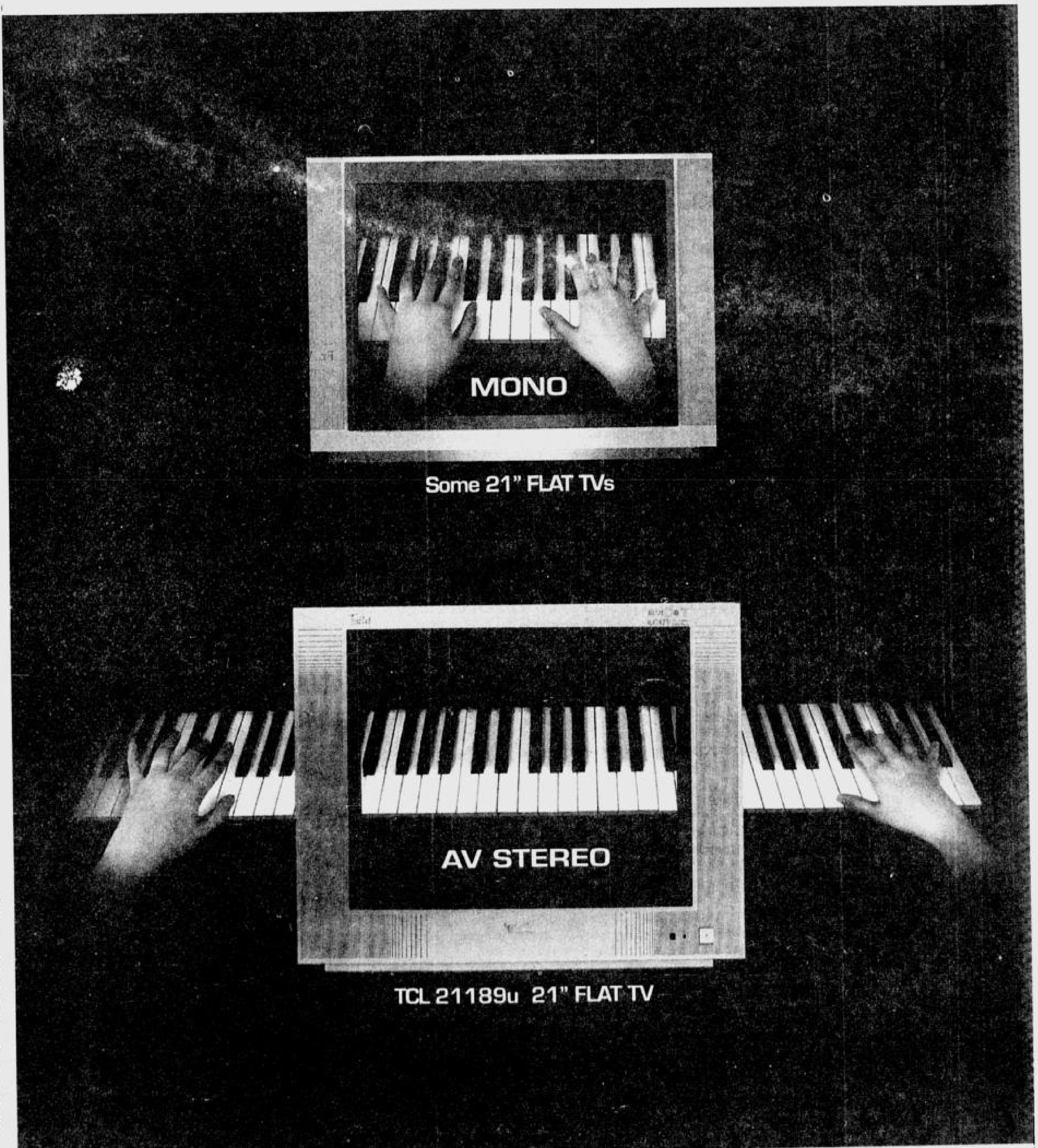

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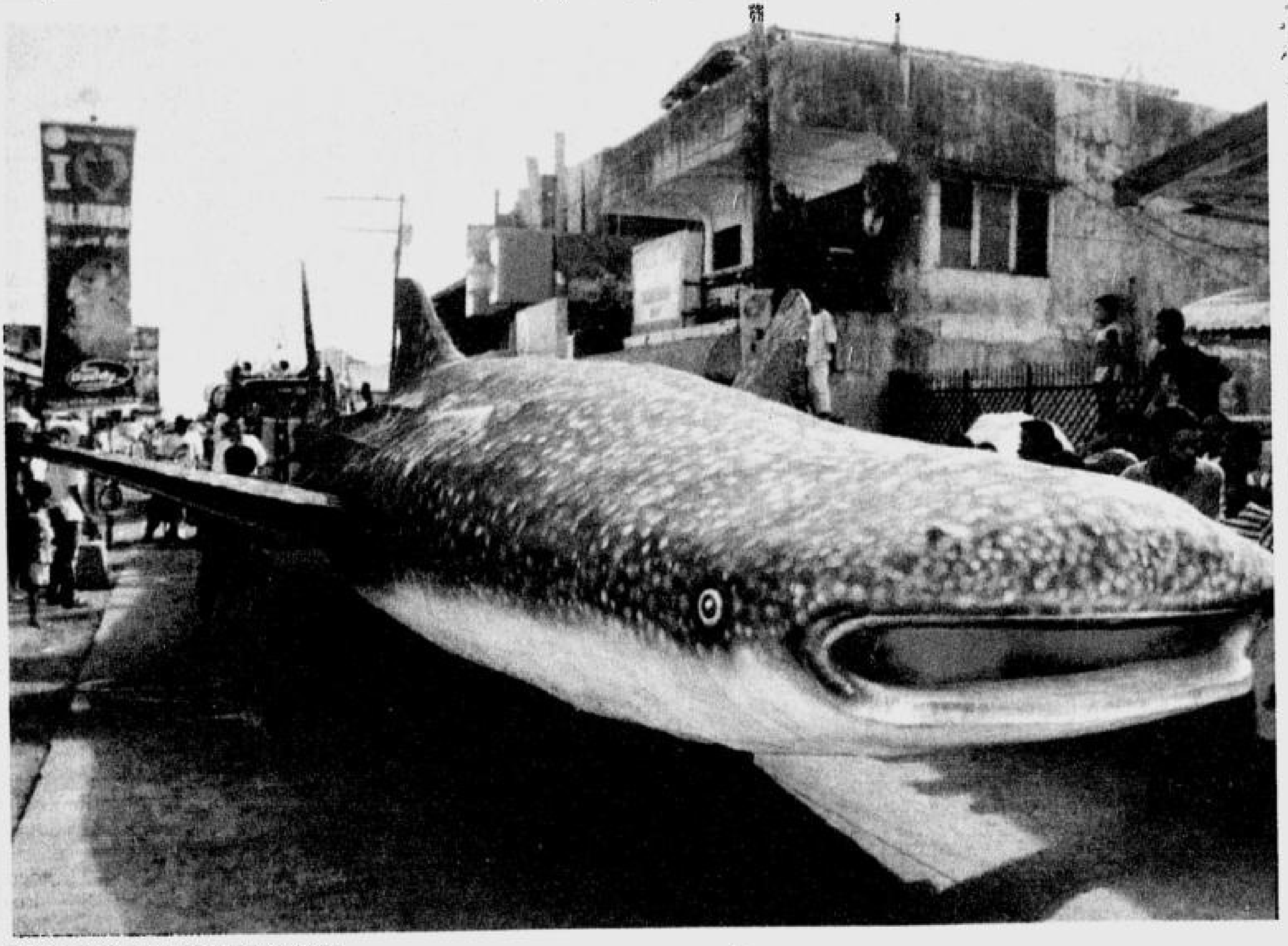


WHALE SHARK INVASION
A replica of the world's biggest fish, the whale shark, known in Donsol, Sorsogon as *butanding*, is paraded through the town's streets during the celebration of the Butanding Festival last Sunday. NINO JESUS ORBETA

BIRTHDAY PARTY TURNED SOUR

85 people hospitalized after eating spaghetti

DAGUPAN CITY—At least 85 people, aged between nine months and 59 years, suffered from food poisoning after eating spaghetti served during a birthday party in Manaoag, Pangasinan on Saturday afternoon.

Reports said the victims, most of them neighbors and relatives of the party's host, started to suffer from stomach aches, diarrhea, fever and vomiting on Sunday morning and were taken to the Region I Medical Center here starting noon of that day.

The regional Department of Health has sent an epidemiological team to Manaoag, 20 km from here, to investigate the food poisoning.

Children's party

Reports said the victims attended the birthday party of a two-year-old boy in Barangay Poblacion in Manaoag. The boy was also hospitalized.

Seventy-eight of the victims were taken to the RIMC, six to the Pangasinan Provincial Hospital in San Carlos City and one to the Mapandan Community Hospital.

Most of the victims were declared out of danger and released from the hospital on Monday morning.

Dr. Eduardo Janairo, DOH regional director, said his office sent medicines and intravenous fluids to the RIMC to replenish the hospital's supplies.

Dr. Jesus Canto, RIMC chief, said the victims needed to be rehydrated.

Mild-to-moderate

Canto said while the victims only suffered mild to moderate food poisoning, the cases would have been serious if the victims' lost body fluids were not replenished immediately. The children were given intravenous fluids while the adults were given oral rehydration salts.

A father of one of the victims, quoting accounts from people who helped prepare the food during the party, said the catsup used to make the spaghetti sauce had bubbles when its container was opened.

Canto said the RIMC laboratory has started testing stool and vomit samples of the victims and leftover spaghetti sauce to determine the cause of the poisoning.

Ingredients

The cook, Zenaida Bautista, said she used Italian spaghetti sauce, catsup, tomato paste, liver spread, ground beef and homemade hotdogs to make the spaghetti sauce.

She said she ate spaghetti during the party but did not get sick. However, her daughter, Riza, 15, and son Jeffrey, 18, were among the victims.

Among those still confined at the RIMC is nine-month-old Jesame Mabanta.

Mabanta's mother said she did not feed the boy spaghetti, prompting Canto to say that it could be coincidental that the baby also had diarrhea.

"We have to test the water in the area, too," he said.

Janairo said he asked the epidemiological team to get samples of all food and drinks served during the party.

"We will study all possible causes," he said. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Start of trial of Damalerio case delayed

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The Regional Trial Court yesterday reset the pre-trial conference of the murder case filed against a police officer who allegedly killed Pagadian-based journalist Edgar Damalerio in 2002.

This came after the lawyers of accused PO1 Guillermo Wapille asked to have the case dismissed on the ground that the information against their client was "fatally defective."

Judge Ramon Codilla of RTC Branch 19 reset the pre-trial conference for today and ordered the defense to file their motion to quash the information within two days.

The court also gave the prosecution another two days to submit its comment on the motion to be filed by the defense.

This was the second time that the pre-trial of the case was postponed. It was originally set on April 11 but was rescheduled to April 25 because the accused had no lawyer then.

Wapille is accused of killing Damalerio, managing editor of the Mindanao Scribe and a radio commentator of dxKP on May 13, 2002.

The police officer, who has been detained since March 9 at Bagong Buhay Rehabilitation Center, pleaded not guilty to the murder charge during his arraignment before Judge Rolando Goan of RTC Branch 20 in Pagadian City on Sept. 24, 2004.

When the pre-trial conference was about to start yesterday, defense lawyers Flavio Cordero and Honorato Hermosisima Jr. questioned the validity of the information against their client.

"They argued that the information was defective because it was not with the approval of the city prosecutor of Pagadian City," said Acting Cebu City Prosecutor Nicholas Sellon who heads the three-man prosecution panel.

The information for murder against Wapille was signed by members of the panel formed by Regional State Prosecutor Wilfredo Yu of Western Mindanao.

They were Assistant Regional State Prosecutor Ricardo Cabaron, Second Assistant Provincial Prosecutor for Sulu Dennis Araojo and Fourth Assistant City Prosecutor Jaime Machutes.

Former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, in his memorandum order number 16 dated July 3, 2002, directed Yu to take over the preliminary investigation as requested by lawyer Friolo Icao, chief of the National Bureau of Investigation Pagadian District Office.

In an order dated July 4, 2002, Yu formed the panel headed by Cabaron and designated them as acting city prosecutors of Pagadian to conduct the preliminary investigation.

Pagadian City prosecutor Reynaldo Goan had also approved the endorsement of second Assistant City Prosecutor Alandrex Betoya, turning over the Damalerio case to the regional state prosecutor.

Sellon said the defense panel cited a recent Supreme Court decision ruling in March 2004 that the regional state prosecutor had no authority to designate acting city prosecutors.

"The prosecution countered by saying the panel assigned to conduct the preliminary investigation were designated as acting city prosecutors of Pagadian by then Justice Secretary Hernando Perez after the local prosecutors were asked to inhibit," he said.

Assistant Cebu City prosecutor Fernando Gubalane, a member of the Damalerio prosecution team, said they would oppose the motion of the defense for lack of basis.

He said the designation of the Cabaron panel was valid because Gemma Damalerio, wife of the victim, had asked the Pagadian City prosecutors to inhibit from conducting the preliminary investigation.

Teeners arrested for stabbing teacher dead after alleged molestation incident

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A high school teacher was killed about dawn on Sunday when an 18-year-old neighbor stabbed him 15 times in his home on Gil Tudtud Street in Barangay Mabolo in this city.

The victim was identified as Joseph Tapayan, 37 and fourth year class adviser in one of the public secondary schools in Mandaue City, Cebu.

The police arrested the suspect, Mark Tolibao, 18, at the house of a relative in Barangay Mohon, Talisay City, Cebu at about 10 a.m. on Sunday, about seven hours after the crime was allegedly committed.

Arrested with the suspect was his 17-year-old cousin whom Tolibao claimed was his companion in killing the teacher.

SPO3 Isagani Pugoy said the suspects were identified after two neighbors saw them running out of the victim's house at about 3 a.m. on Sunday wearing bloodstained shirts.

Pugoy claimed that Tolibao admitted to him that he stabbed the teacher several times in rage when he found that he had been molested while he was sleeping inside Tapayan's house.

But he said charges of robbery with homicide would be filed against the two before the city prosecutor's office after it was found that Tolibao and his cousin took an expensive cellular phone and the class ring of the teacher.

Dr. Lorna Rances, Mandaue City Schools Division superintendent, said they could not believe the suspect's allegation because Tapayan was well respected and had been professional.

"That should be proven in court. But as of now, we could not believe that Tapayan did that to the boy. He was a well-respected teacher by his students and there was no derogatory reports that we got against Tapayan," she said.

According to Pugoy, the suspect claimed that he, his cousin and another friend were drinking at a basketball court near the house of Tapayan.

Tapayan allegedly invited the boys to his house where they continued drinking at 11 p.m. on Saturday.

Gov promotes use of organic fertilizers

DUMAGUETE CITY—Negros Oriental Gov. George P. Arnaiz is promoting the use of organic fertilizer all over the country to reduce the prices of inorganic fertilizer, protect the environment and reduce the volume of garbage.

Arnaiz said he was selling the idea to the members of the League of Provinces in the Philippines as he pointed out that the country could benefit a lot if all the provinces would adopt his suggestion.

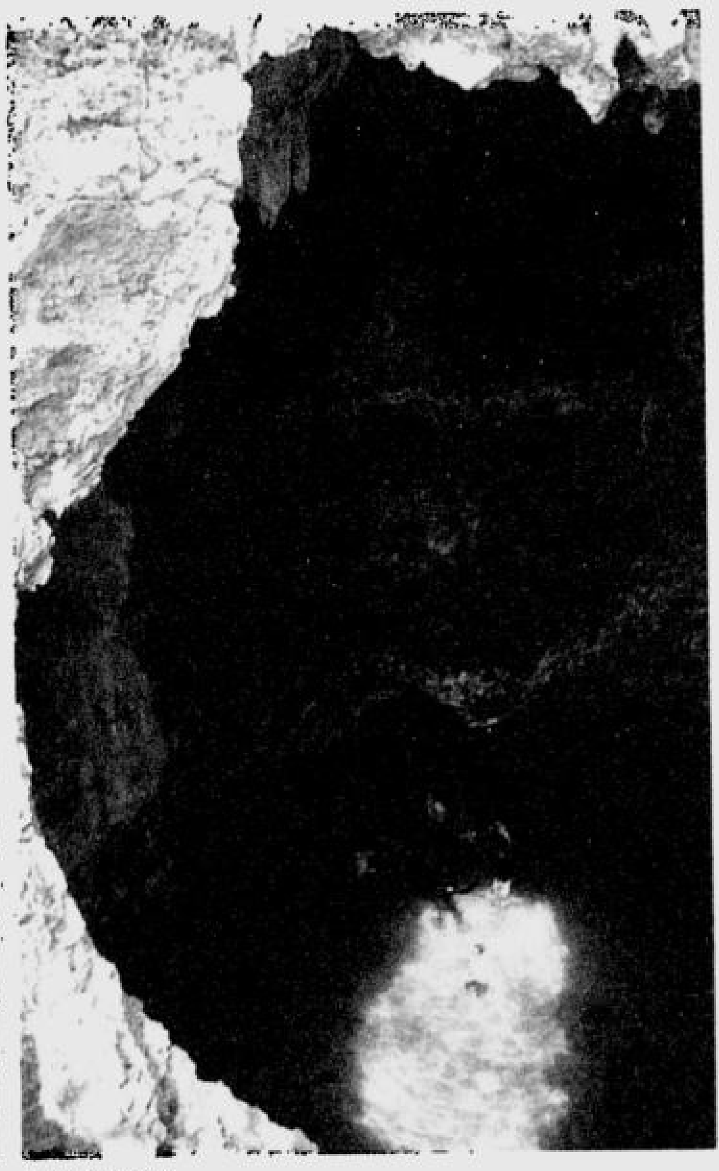
"If everybody uses organic fertilizer, it will bring a lot of benefits to the country. It will bring down the cost of inorganic fertilizers because the demand for it will become lesser," Arnaiz said.

In Negros Oriental, the governor said the provincial government, through the Provincial Agriculturist Office, is now aggressively pushing the use of fertilizer from organic materials using the Night African Crawler earthworm.

He said some businessmen in the province were investing on the production of organic fertilizer using such earthworm, which would be fed with organic garbage.

Arnaiz said the waste disposed by the earthworm would become the organic fertilizer.

"The price of this fertilizer will be cheaper and (it is environment-friendly," the governor added. *Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*



SEA CAVES
Filipino tourists frolic in one of the 111 caves found on the Hundred Islands and which, Alaminos Mayor Hernani Braganza said, are waiting to be discovered. The caves are just one of the attractions on the Hundred Islands which will celebrate a Festival of the Hundred Islands on April 28. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

German, Pinay held for sex attack on girl

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Police arrested a German tourist and a Filipina on Boracay Island in Aklan last Friday for allegedly molesting an 11-year-old girl.

Klaus Peter Lanta, 55, and his companion Lallaine Decena, 29, of Hinobaan town in Negros Occidental, have been detained at the Boracay Special Protection Unit (BSPU) station after the girl's mother filed a complaint for the alleged molestation.

PO1 Rachel Quisoy, of the BSPU Women and Children's Desk, said Decena admitted to being a freelance sex worker while Lanta claimed to be an accountant in Memmingem, Germany.

Police said the victim, a Grade 5 pupil, was watching a show around 8:10 p.m. at the Bagaberde Music and Sports Bar, when Decena approached the girl and offered her wine.

Decena left the girl after she refused the offer but returned and again offered juice to the girl which she accepted. Lanta later joined Decena and the girl.

The German and Decena allegedly convinced the girl to go with them to the Angol Point resort near Boat Station 3 where the coupled was billeted.

INQBOX Question of the Week

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to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them.

ROUNDUP

2 soldiers killed

DAVAO CITY—At least two Army soldiers were killed during separate attacks by suspected members of the New People's Army (NPA) in Kapalong, Davao del Norte, reports reaching the military and police regional headquarters here said yesterday. The first to be killed was Cpl. Cresidelio Magduce of the 27th Infantry Battalion based in Pikit, North Cotabato. Magduce was assisting a customer in a hardware owned by a cousin in Barangay Poblacion, Kapalong on Friday, when a lone gunman shot him dead. Around 5:15 p.m. also on Friday, Sgt. Desiderio Jabinite of the 25th Infantry Battalion based in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur was in a store in Barangay Maniki when shot to death by one of two suspects in motorcycles. The suspects took away his M-16 Armalite rifle. *Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Mangyan gathering

CITY OF CALAPAN—Fr. Rod Salazar, director of the tribal apostolate in Occidental Mindoro, yesterday told the INQUIRER that 60 leaders representing about 10,000 Mangyans from seven tribes attended the general assembly of Pantribung Samahan sa Kanlurang Mindoro (Pasakami) on April 12-14 at Sitio Bamban, Barangay Nicholas, Magsaysay town, Occidental Mindoro. The group discussed various concerns and problems. Among those discussed was the mapping of boundaries of the tribes' ancestral lands and the mining issue. The Kapngan para sa Lupaing Ninuno-Oriental Mindoro, Pasakami's counterpart in Oriental Mindoro, was also represented in the assembly, Salazar said. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

More graduates in Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—Dominador Peralta Jr., Commission on Higher Education regional director, estimated that there would be at least 19,000 college graduates this year in the Bicol region. This, Peralta said, represents an increase of about 1,000 over last year's number of 18,746 graduates. He admitted, however, that the CHEd regional office could not release data on graduates for the current year as it was still awaiting reports from colleges and universities. CHEd records showed that there were about 17,000 graduates in all courses in the Bicol region in 2003. *Jocelyn Amados, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau student trainee*

Illegally cut lumber seized

LUCENA CITY—Elements of the 414th Provincial Police Mobile Group and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources confiscated 1,200 pieces of newly sawn lumber during a raid in a warehouse of a local businessman in Barangay Magsaysay, Infanta, Quezon last week. In a report, police identified the suspect as Miguel V. Salazar, resident of the same place. The raiding team seized a total 24,500 board feet of assorted hardwood species believed to be illegally cut from Sierra Madre, with an estimated total value of P118,000. In a related report, the 417th Provincial Police Mobile Group intercepted a six-wheel truck loaded with 5,000 board feet of coconut lumber in Calauag town on Thursday. Police arrested Hermenigildo Dumlao, 60, driver of the truck and resident of San Carlos City. Police turned the confiscated lumber over to the Philippine Coconut Authority. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

New market to be finished

TABACO CITY—The two-story Tabaco City Mall and Supermarket is expected to be finished next month, according to Mayor Alex Burce. Burce said the new market project has a total cost of P169 million. With its easy access to neighboring towns and cities and nearby islands, this city is fast developing as a center of trade and commerce and currently hosts some 1,268 registered establishments. The city is famous for its cutlery products and showcases its rich heritage through the annual "Tabak Festival," which is celebrated in the month of March. The festival, Burce said, is an unusual blend of values, virtues and dreams of simple country life. *Antoinette Bierso, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau student trainee*

2 prosecutors questioned on narc cases

WATCHFUL EYES
A soldier carrying a machine gun keeps tight watch at the entrance of the Jolo provincial capitol during the visit there of US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone April 22. AFP

Irregularities alleged in 'softness' on drugs

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—City Prosecutor Augustus Rallos and First Assistant City Prosecutor Jesus Ocdinaria are facing investigation for alleged irregularities in the handling of drug related cases in the city.

The investigation followed a complaint filed by City Prosecutor 1 Eduardo Sayson and Assistant City Prosecutors Abraham Bayona and Rosanna Saril–Toledano for alleged "serious irregularities and abusive exercise of authority and quasi-judicial discretion."

They asked Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to relieve Rallos and Ocdinaria of their administrative authority pending his action on the complaint.

Gonzalez said the Department of Justice had conducted an investigation of an administrative complaint filed against Rallos and Ocdinaria.

But he told the INQUIRER that even before the written complaint was filed by the three prosecutors, he had already sent a DOJ investigating team to Bacolod to look into numerous verbal complaints he had received against the two officials.

The investigating team already submitted a report to him, Gonzalez said.

"On the surface, there appears to be grounds for the complaints but I am still assessing the investigation report," Gonzalez said, adding that he did not want to jump to conclusions on the matter.

"At least the secretary of justice is sober enough to listen to our side. There are no grounds for the charges against us," said Rallos in a separate interview.

He said they had already sent to Gonzalez their reply to the allegations against them, even before the three prosecutors filed the written complaint.

"I am just hoping the secretary of justice will analyze the complaints fairly, and ultimately clear our names that have already been destroyed by unjust trial by publicity," Rallos said.

He said the purpose of the complaint was to malign him and Ocdinaria, especially since a copy was released to the media.

In their complaint, Sayson, Bayona and Toledano said they were disgusted and demoralized at the "unusual manner" in which Rallos and Ocdinaria had been exercising their authority over the assistant city prosecutors and were "administering a peculiar brand of justice."

"The City Prosecutor's Office of Bacolod City is now a favorite menu in the Halls of Justice of talk among the public, the lawyers and the judges of being a bedlam of corruption and serious irregularities in the dismissal of drug cases," the three prosecutors said.

They noted questionable orders of their superiors to release "drug pushers and users from police lock-up (cells) on the basis of highly irregular, repetitious and peremptory 'minute resolutions' that (did) not discuss the facts and the law from which the decision to release the drug offenders were based."

There were instances when information signed by inquest prosecutors for filing had been reversed by their superiors without their knowledge, they said.

Sometimes, they added, the functions of the assigned inquest prosecutors were usurped and cases were autocratically taken over, either by the reviewing prosecutor or the city prosecutor, that resulted in release orders of drug pushers and users, and the eventual dismissal of cases.

They also cited missing records of drug-related cases, anomalous assignments and removal of cases from a neutral prosecutor, dismissal of resolutions by the city prosecutor without making any reference to their resolutions, among other offenses.

Mayor warns kidnappers of relatives' abduction

COTABATO CITY—It will be an eye for an eye.

A mayor in Maguindanao has threatened to abduct the relatives of the suspected kidnappers of a Filipino-Chinese trader if they failed to release their captive.

Sultan Kudarat town mayor Tocao Mastura made the warning as he identified Nasi "Jun" Sarat as the brains behind the abduction of Benny Cota, owner of Solid Marketing store here, on April 8.

The military and the police said they suspect that Cota has been taken by the Pentagon gang, which shot to notoriety because of its recent high profile abductions and its alleged ties with the Jemaah Islamiyah, a terror network in Southeast Asia with links to the al-Qaida.

But Mastura said Sarat is an ordinary kidnapper and criminal.

Sarat was previously arrested on kidnapping charges in connection with the abduction and subsequent release of a wealthy trader here. He is out on bail.

Mastura said he had already talked to Sarat's two wives who promised to relay his warning to their husband.

"I know the whereabouts of your relatives in my town. So if you don't want to have regrets in the future, release Cota as soon as possible," Mastura warned.

Sarat, he said, was sighted, along with his followers and the captive, in the outskirts of Sultan Kudarat several times. *Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Vigilance paves way for sea urchin's return

SANTIAGO, Ilocos Sur—Sea urchins, a gourmand's delight known here as *maritangtang*, is making a comeback because of community vigilance.

Vice Mayor Norman Mendoza said the population of *maritangtang*, which used to be ignored in seaside villages here, was almost decimated because of cyanide fishing and poaching in his town.

Mendoza said the over gathering of baby sea urchins contributed to the near decimation of *maritangtang* in San Esteban town. Sea urchins gathered in San Esteban are sold to cage growers in this town and Sta. Maria.

Mendoza said to counter the loss, the Santiago town council passed a resolution calling for a stop to cyanide fishing and sea urchin poaching in the town.

The council instead proposed sea ranching or grow-out culture to improve the local population of sea urchins. Under the proposal, baby sea urchins would be fed twice a week with seaweeds, locally known as *aragan*, for eight months and then sold to commercial buyers.

Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson said the towns of Sta. Lucia and Santiago are among the areas starting the culture of sea urchins.

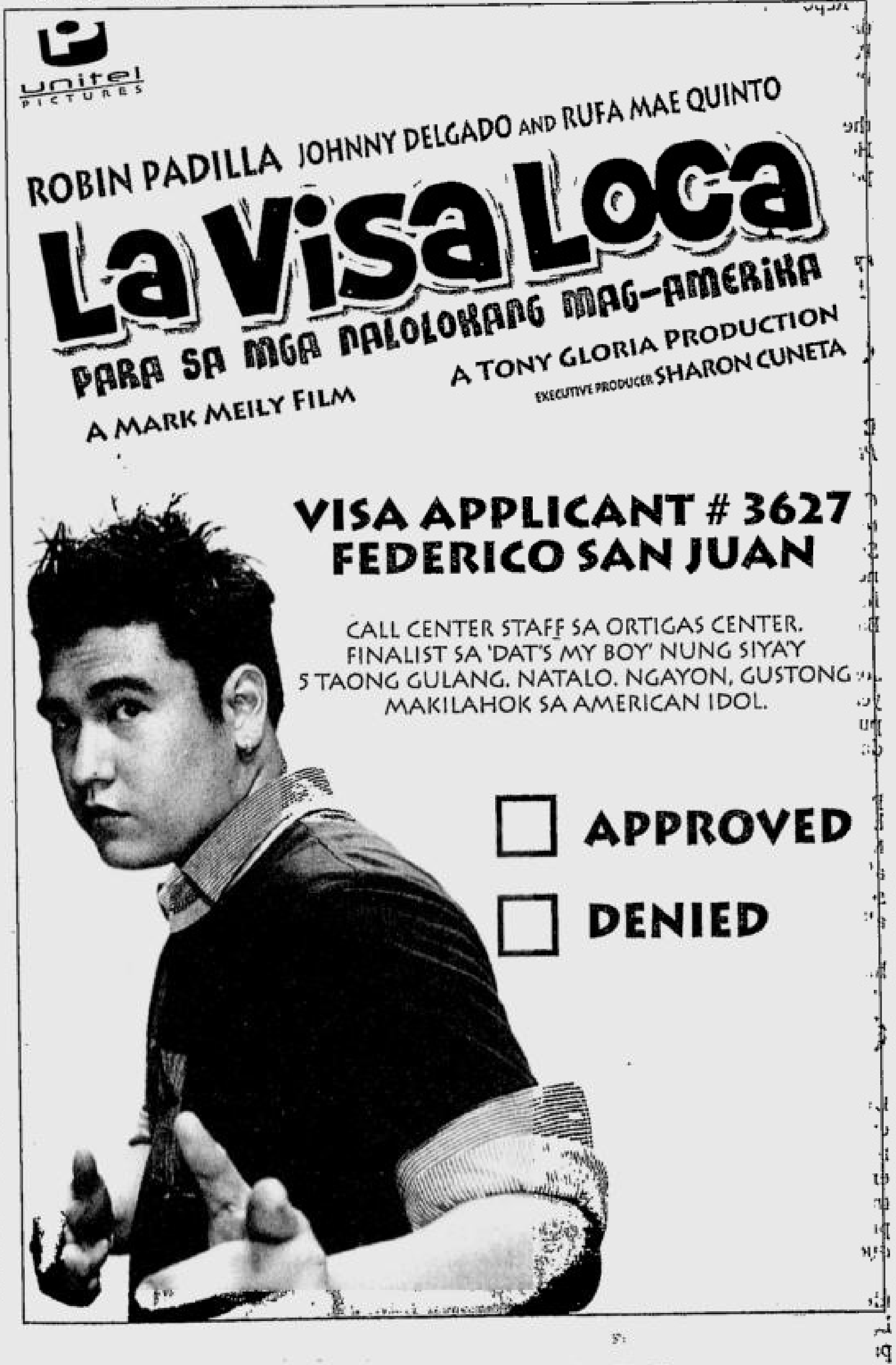
Although cultured *maritangtang* tastes different from wild sea urchins, Singson said the culture of this spiny sea creature has a big business potential.

A piece of *maritangtang* is sold for P20 in Metro Manila.

Discriminating consumers, particularly diners in Japanese restaurants, wanted sea urchins fresh. Sea urchin is known as *uni* in Japanese and it is a prized delicacy.

Singson has helped form a divers' group to protect sea urchins and coral reefs in his district from cyanide and dynamite fishing. These divers alert the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of violators, he said.

"Eventually, we will have to establish a marine sanctuary to preserve the sea urchins," Singson said. *Frank Cimatu and Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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Bus reduction on Edsa seen

MOTORISTS can expect a measure of relief from traffic jams at Edsa in three months with the reduction of the number of buses plying the major thoroughfare, according to Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board chair Elena Bautista.

Bautista said a survey would be conducted in the next three months to gather concrete data on how many passengers use the Edsa route, and how many buses actually need to be deployed there.

But she added that by her reckoning, the current occupancy of buses along Edsa is only 52 percent, meaning even with almost half of the buses gone, the commuting public could still be serviced.

"I just need scientific data to back up the logical plan. In the event that cases are filed against me, I have the data to back me up," she said yesterday. The plan Bautista referred to was the diversion of the excess number of buses to other needy routes.

She also said the popularity of the MRT, which traverses Edsa, is one reason for the planned reduction of buses along the route. The MRT already services around 500,000 passengers daily, she added.

The LTFRB chair also noted the discrepancy between the number of bus operators servicing Edsa, and the number of operators in the provinces. In Edsa alone, there are 30 operators with franchises.

Bautista added that this was an offshoot of her predecessor's earlier move to approve all applications for franchises at Edsa after the MRT was built. When she joined the LTFRB in 2003, her first move was to impose a moratorium on the granting of franchises. *Leila B. Salaverria*

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo talks to the men behind the ocean park project (from left): Andrew Lee, chair, and Lim Chee Yong, executive director of the China Oceanis Group, and Tourism Secretary Ace Durano. VAL HANDUMON

MS. PEARL OF THE ORIENT

CROWNING GLORY. The winners of the recently concluded Pearl of the Orient pageant flash their smiles to millions of viewers. 18-year-old Cebu lass Kristine Sexon (center) was crowned Miss Pearl of the Orient during the two-hour ceremony. She will be competing in the Miss Globe 2005 beauty pageant to be held in Moscow this August according to pageant organizer and Miss Pearl of the Orient 1974 Melissa Dizon. Also in photo are (from left) 3rd runner-up Corinne Flores, 1st runner-up Marina Concepcion, finalist and Miss Friendship Danielle Mae Rivera, and 2nd runner-up Elizabeth Aguila.

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Ocean park to rise in Manila Bay area

By Leila B. Salaverria

IN LESS than two years, Metro Manilans will be able to enjoy interacting with dolphins, sea turtles and other marine life in an ocean park at the boardwalk behind the Quirino Grandstand in the Manila Bay area.

The foreign-funded park costing $20 million is similar to those found in Hong Kong and Singapore.

The Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) yesterday signed a memorandum of agreement with the Chinese and Malaysian consortium China Oceanis Group Ltd. (COGL) for the building of the Manila Ocean Park. President Macapagal-Arroyo was on hand to witness the signing between PTA Chairman Robert Dean Barbers and COGL's Lim Chee Yung.

Under the agreement, the COGL was given a 25-year lease to some parts of the PTA-owned Manila boardwalk, and will shoulder the cost of building the facilities for the park which is expected to be open by December 2006.

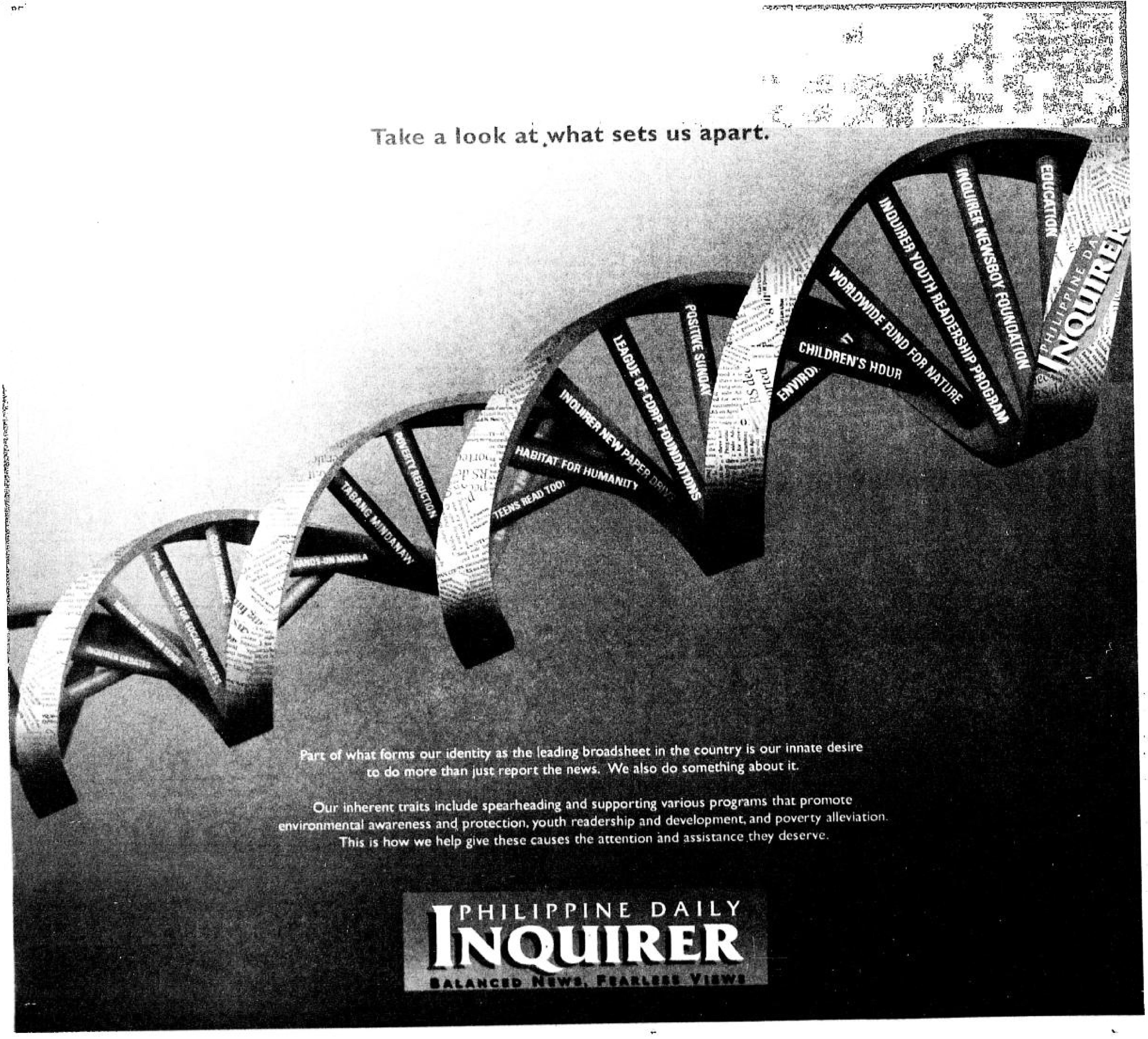
Among the features of the park are open marine habitat facilities, dolphin feeding activities, a sea turtle area, a cactus garden and even a swimming area. The COGL would also build a plaza for special events and areas for shops and restaurants. They will also develop the park located in front of the boardwalk.

The consortium will also pay a yearly rent of P16.5 million, with an upward adjustment every five years.

Barbers hailed the project as a major coup for the country because it is expected not only to enhance local and foreign tourism and to generate jobs for some 2,000 locals, but to pave the way for further infrastructure development.

COGL director Lim Chee Yung said the park would also be used to advance the cause of marine environment protection.

And since a swimming area and snorkeling activities would also be available at the park, the consortium would be cleaning the murky waters around the Manila Boardwalk.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Part of what forms our identity as the leading broadsheet in the country is our innate desire to do more than just report the news. We also do something about it.

Our inherent traits include spearheading and supporting various programs that promote environmental awareness and protection, youth readership and development, and poverty alleviation. This is how we help give these causes the attention and assistance they deserve.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

SSS site reclassification bogs down project

By Christine Gaylican

THE SOCIAL Security System (SSS) has urged the Quezon City Council to approve immediately the reclassification of its area into a commercial zone so it could go ahead with an P8-billion property development project.

The project has been pending for six years now.

The passage of City Ordinance No. 2004 changing the government/institutional classification of the site into a commercial zone is needed to secure a second approval from the Investment Coordination Committee for the build-operate-transfer project proposal submitted by SSS and the consortium led by developer EC Harris.

SSS officials, led by president and chief executive officer Corazon dela Paz, made a presentation yesterday to Mayor Feliciano Belmonte and the councilors, emphasizing the need for and urgency of the ordinance.

The SSS Corporate Center project had been endorsed by Mayor Belmonte, but some city councilors have reservations about the project. Dela Paz assured the city government that there would be a flow of new taxes and investments to the city. It is estimated the project would result in P50 million in real estate taxes and 15,000 jobs for residents.

The property development project, now estimated to be worth P8 billion, includes a plan to develop the idle property on East Avenue corner Edsa into an SSS Corporate Center with a twin-tower structure that will be the pension fund's new headquarters.

Also part of the project is the redevelopment of the SSS' existing 12-story headquarters, also on East Avenue, into a new hospital for members.

The SSS, a pension fund for private sector employees, had been discussing with the foreign group the property project since 1999.

Dela Paz said the pension fund would not spend a single centavo for the project. She said the SSS' contribution to the prospective joint venture would be its property.

The SSS was forced to dip into its reserves last year to pay claims that exceeded by P3 billion total contributions during the period.

EC Harris is a leading international consultant specializing in real estate, infrastructure and construction projects. It employs 2,000 people and maintains 40 offices in over 20 different countries. The firm has worked on projects in more than 80 countries and turns over consultancy fees in excess of $110 million a year.

Press club unveils Plaridel statue at tribute tomorrow

By Tina G. Santos

A NEW haven for journalists—and an alternative to the older club.

These were exactly what veteran journalists had in mind when they organized Samahang Plaridel (SP), a new press association named after a man who had valued freedom of thought and the pursuit of truth.

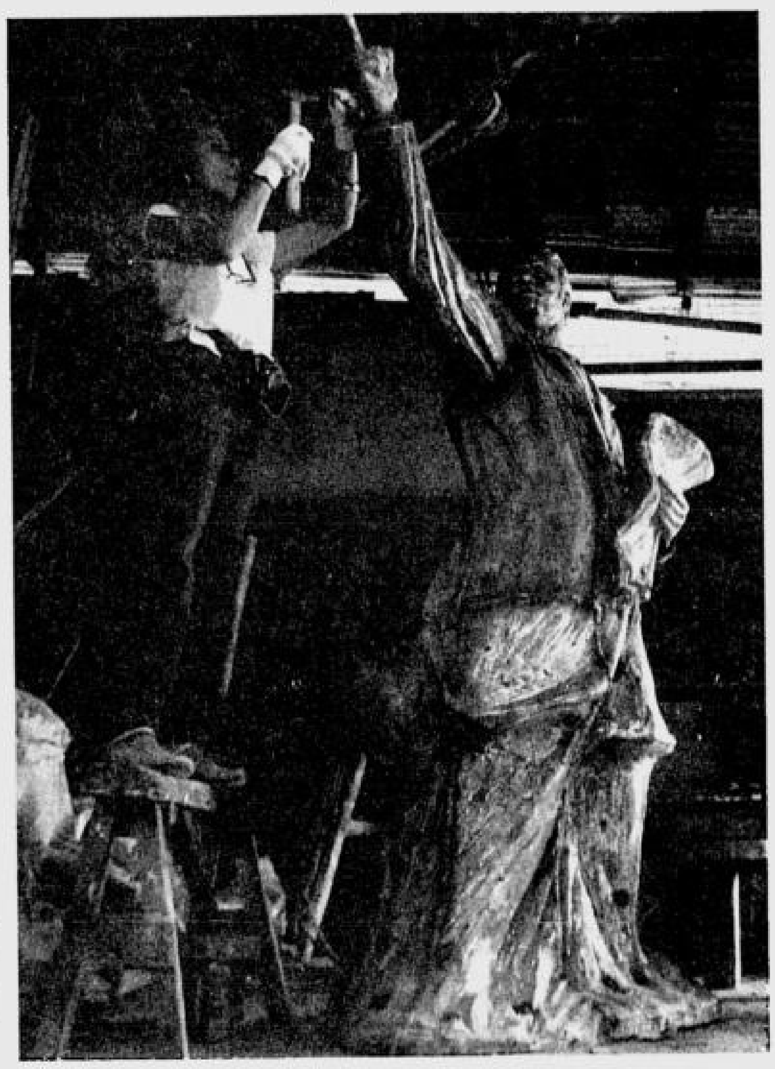
Plaridel was the pen name of Marcelo H. del Pilar, who fills up the pages of history as a selfless propagandist whose stewardship of the reformist newspaper *La Solidaridad* helped crystallize nationalist sentiments and ignite libertarian ideas in the 1890s.

His selected writings are now being syndicated in major local newspapers, a project initiated by the doyenne of Filipino columnists Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, a director of Samahang Plaridel.

"One of our goals is to keep Plaridel's memory and his writings alive by propagating his ideals, because even though he is venerated all over the country, many people still do not know him and have not read him because he wrote in Spanish and old-fashioned Tagalog," Nakpil said.

"We also intend to promote camaraderie among journalists, particularly those who have been practitioners for the past 20 years or more," she added.

Samahang Plaridel was founded two years ago by media practitioners and other communications specialists who are considered the cream of Philippine journalism.



SCULPTOR Julie Lluch adds finishing touches to bronze statue of Marcelo H. del Pilar. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Its roster of officers include INQUIRER publisher Isagani Yambot and columnist Neal Cruz, Manila Bulletin associate editor and columnist Adrian Cristobal, Philippine Star publisher Max Soliven, Manila Bulletin editor Cris Icban Jr., former Bulletin editor Ben Rodriguez, and former Press Secretary Rod Reyes, among others.

Many of them admitted that putting up Samahang Plaridel came about because of their disappointment over the membership of the National Press Club (NPC)—once regarded as an elite, exclusive club of legitimate journalists—and repeated attempts to cleanse the membership roster, according to Cruz.

"The NPC used to be an amiable and friendly place where newsmen relaxed with colleagues after their deadlines. Nonmembers were even flattered and honored to be invited to dine and drink there," said columnist Julius Fortuna.

"But now, its members feel strangers in their own club. We don't recognize most of the people who frequent the club these days," he added.

Samahang Plaridel officers, however, were quick to add that the new press club does not aim to replace the NPC.

"But SP will endeavor to stick as close to the original purpose of the Press Club [as possible], which was to group only those who are engaged in journalism, those who are dedicated and have remained loyal to their vocation," Cruz stressed.

Just the same, the Samahang Plaridel had opted to put up a place where its members could unwind after deadlines.

Aptly named The Front Page, a clubhouse and piano bar located at the Traveler's Life building at the corner of M.H. del Pilar and T.M. Kalaw, just across the National Library, has now become the latest watering hole of journalists.

"One can enjoy music, dancing, drinks, fine food and convivial company on the first floor, and a lounge with a reading room, piped-in mood music, a billiards room, its own kitchen and another bar, television sets, chess sets and an office with computers on the third floor," Cruz said.

Although the clubhouse is exclusive to members of the Samahang Plaridel, the piano bar is open to the public.

But not everybody can join the club since membership to Samahang Plaridel is by invitation.

"We want to provide an association where we can maintain the standards of journalism," said Fortuna.

"All membership applications have to be endorsed to and must have the unanimous approval of the board of directors," he added.

Apart from upholding the dignity of the journalism profession, Cruz said another fitting tribute to the man regarded as the chosen patron of today's journalists would be the unveiling of a larger-than-life replica of his likeness tomorrow.

Striking an imposing but welcoming stance, the seven-foot bronze statue of Del Pilar stands on a six-foot pedestal at the Plaza Plaridel, the children's park in front of the Manila Zoo on Quirino Avenue, Malate, Manila.

Crafted by renowned sculptor Julie Lluch, the P1.3-million statue is a joint project of the Samahang Plaridel and the Manila city government.

"The statue tells us to look at reality. Del Pilar reminds us of the cost of freedom. He also wants us to open our eyes to the ills and abuses in society," said Lluch.

Fugitive bank exec returns

By Margaux C. Ortiz

AFTER escaping to the United States with millions of stolen dollars in tow, a fugitive bank official is arriving in the country following her arrest last month.

Former Union Bank official Maria Teresita Zapanta, 49, of No. 22 Flora Ylagan St., BF Homes, Parañaque City, was arrested for allegedly illegally acquiring $7 million or P380 million by falsifying commercial documents, according to National Bureau of Investigation Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz.

Diaz said US Immigration Judge Rose Peters of the Executive Office for Immigration Review in San Pedro, California, "has ordered Zapanta to be removed from the US during the period of April 25 to 30."

The Interpol chief said Zapanta, who faces of charges of qualified theft through falsification of commercial documents, would be detained at the NBI jail upon her arrival in the country.

"Although qualified theft is bailable, we are confident that Zapanta would not be allowed to post bail because there is an obvious flight risk," Diaz said, adding that they are looking for 12 other bank officials hiding in the US for similar offenses.

Zapanta left the country for Hong Kong and the US on Sept. 23, 2004, after allegedly fabricating bank documents and amassing hundreds of millions of pesos.

Pasig cops to Subic for retraining

AFTER three of its policemen were implicated in a foiled robbery more than a week ago, it's a fresh start for a police community precinct in Pasig City.

Eastern Police District director Oscar Valenzuela told the INQUIRER he had sent all the policemen from the San Antonio Community Precinct (PCP 19) to the national police training camp in Subic, Zambales.

Replacing them are policemen from the district mobile force, most of them fresh graduates.

The three policemen who were reportedly involved in the robbery on April 15—PO1 Melvin Claveria, PO2 Rodolfo Molina and PO2 Lazaro Hiyao—are now facing summary dismissal proceedings, Velasquez added.

Though he had no direct participation in the alleged crime, precinct commander Senior Insp. Earl Castillo had also been replaced.

Chief Insp. Jaime Cadatal has taken over the post. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Killing of DFA official a black eye to RP

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE POLICE should immediately catch the killers of Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Alicia Ramos if they don't want to be accused of sitting on their butts.

The killing of Ramos gave the country another black eye in the diplomatic community. Ramos was a respected diplomat. Her death came as a shock to foreign diplomats.

If the police fail to arrest the killers in time, the country would become a "dangerous assignment" for foreign diplomats. If that happens, foreign countries would ban their citizens from visiting the Philippines as tourists.

* * *

Reports say that while the intruders were on the upper floor of their house, Ramos' younger sister, Leticia, got out of the house and ran to a nearby police precinct.

But the killers were already gone when the police arrived.

The policemen who received the report should be investigated for the delay in responding to the alarm.

What was the reason for the delay in going to the house of the Ramoses? No vehicle to take them to the scene? Lack of men?

What is their reason this time in arriving late at the crime scene?

* * *

Among all policemen in the world, Metro Manila cops are reportedly the fastest to arrive at the crime scene.

In Los Angeles, cops take five minutes to arrive at the crime scene. In Tokyo, it's four minutes; in Hong Kong, three minutes.

In Metro Manila, cops are at the scene in seconds. Why? Because some of them are criminals.

If Metro Manila cops were not at the scene in seconds, then they were not the perpetrators.

I brought out the bad joke—"bad" for the cops—because an employee of a money changer shop was robbed of P10,000 in broad daylight in Pasig City.

And who were the robbers? Three members of the Pasig City police force.

Such a story no longer shocks the citizenry. They're inured to reports of policemen being involved in crime.

* * *

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza has banned enforcers from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) from operating in his city.

Atienza was irked by a report that an MMDA clearing operation in Paco was marred by the shooting to death of a pedicab driver and the wounding of another.

Although MMDA enforcers are not issued firearms, some of them carry guns secretly.

Most MMDA enforcers are very abusive. Their abusive behavior is condoned by MMDA officials.

I found this out last year when I brought before MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando a bus conductor who complained of being roughed up by MMDA traffic enforcers.

The bus conductor was accompanied by a female passenger who witnessed the mauling.

What did Fernando do? Nothing.

Fernando said that he was standing by his men. I said that there was a witness, the female passenger who came along.

You know what the MMDA chief said? Probably the witness was sent by Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay with whom he was having a spat at the time. He said that the female passenger was a Makati resident.

Because of that, I lost my respect for Fernando.

* * *

Other mayors in Metro Manila could take a cue from Mayor Atienza. They should ban MMDA enforcers in their cities or towns.

If they unite against Fernando, perhaps he will change his stance and no longer condone the abusive behavior of his enforcers.

Makati's Binay was right in standing up to Fernando, who has become a petty tyrant.

* * *

I condole with Rep. Ben Hur Abalos on the untimely demise of his daughter Ciara Marie, 19.

No amount of words could allay the anguish being suffered by the congressman and Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos, the grandfather.

An ex-prisoner keeps the faith

By Fran Katigbak

MANUEL Navoa, 49, found God on death row.

Convicted of arson and multiple homicide by the lower courts, he was imprisoned for six years, three of them on death row.

Navoa was a student of agriculture engineering when he got involved with delinquents in his neighborhood.

One of them tried to extort P50,000 from him. When Navoa refused, the extortionist, who turned out to be a police informant, accused him of being responsible for the burning of two movie houses where 17 people died and more than a hundred injured. Only 24 then, Navoa was arrested on June 22, 1979, without a warrant.

Detained for 24 hours, he was not given access to a lawyer or his family. He stayed at the Manila City Jail during the three-year trial.

Despite the testimony of four of his professors that he was in school when the crime was committed, Navoa was still found guilty and put in an isolation cell to await his execution. "I considered suicide," he said. His attitude changed when a Catholic missionary visited him upon learning he was a death convict.

MANUEL Navoa: "What I do is part of a crusade to help many prisoners in need." JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Navoa found refuge in the Catholic prison ministry after he was transferred to the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa. Freed in 1986, he pursued his missionary work, sharing his experiences in speaking tours around the country. Donations poured in for prisoners.

"I was once told to hold on to my faith," he added. "It's my turn to tell other prisoners not to lose hope because the Lord loves them, too."

To send donations or to offer volunteer services, call Manuel Navoa at 0910-6660794 or Fr. Arnold Layoc at 656-2533 or 0917-2548125.

Crematorium proposed for QC

By DJ Yap

QUEZON City residents may soon be given the option to have the bodies of their dead cremated in a public crematorium, instead of burying them in the city's already crowded cemeteries.

Councilor Resty Malañgen and seven other councilors have urged Mayor Feliciano Belmonte and the city engineering office to plan the construction and design of a city crematorium.

In a proposed resolution, Malañgen noted the growing number of Quezon City residents, adding that public and private cemeteries at some point would no longer be able to accommodate the city's dead.

Quezon City has four public cemeteries in Bagbag, Novaliches, Baesa and La Loma. The city also has private burial grounds, including the Eternal Garden in Balintawak, Himlayang Pilipino in Tandang Sora, and Holy Cross on Quirino Highway.

Malañgen added that the proposed crematorium would remedy the expected shortage of burial spaces in the city.

The city has an average annual population growth rate (1995-2000) of 1.92 percent. This year, it has an estimated population of almost 2.4 million people, based on 2000 projections.

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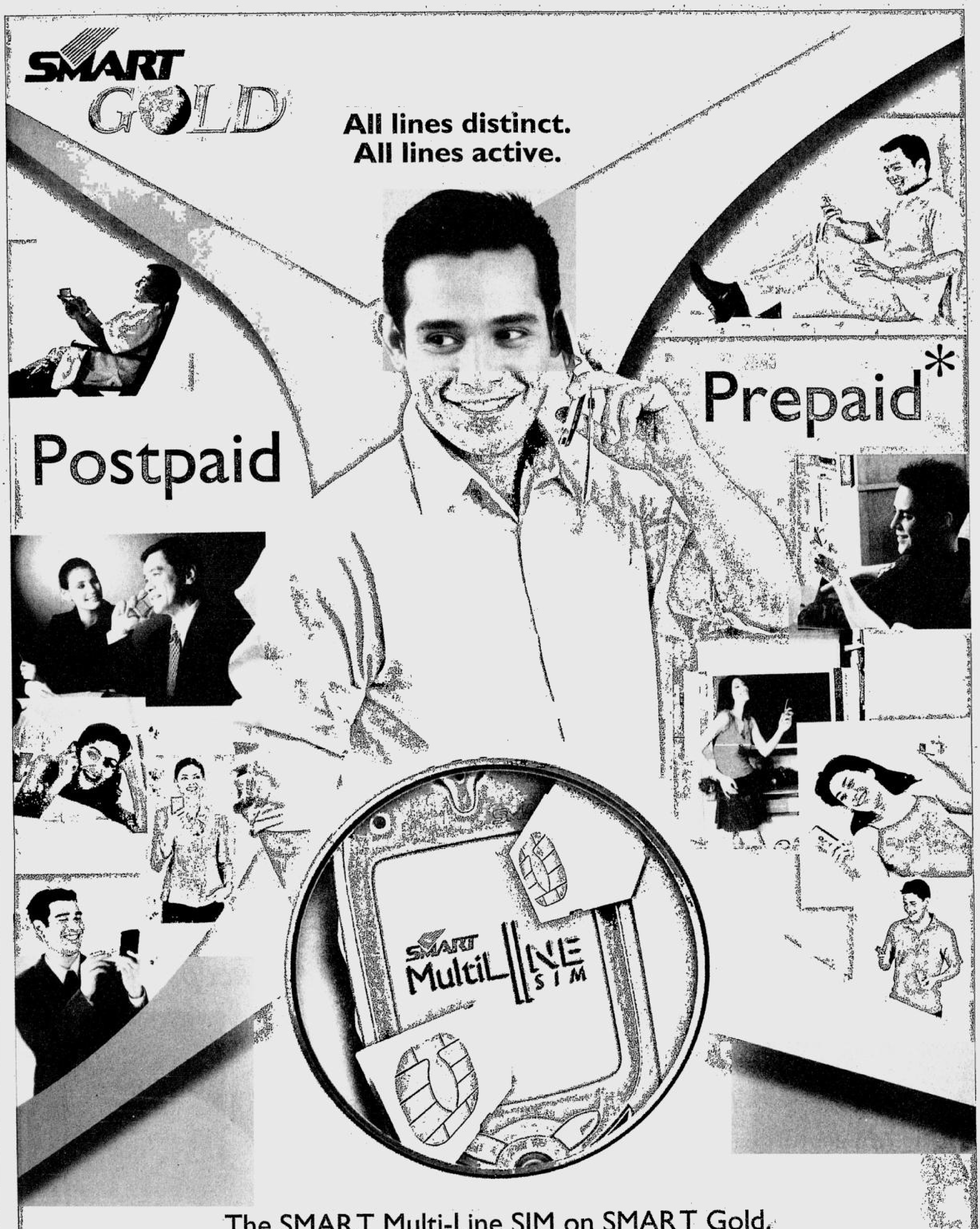

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SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

MOTOR SPORTS: F1 San Marino Grand Prix Race Day; 9:30 a.m. (r); STAR Sports – Take another look at the fourth race of the season.

BASKETBALL: NBA Playoffs, First Round, Pacers vs Celtics, Game 2; 7 a.m. (r-7 p.m.); Rockets vs Mavs; 9:30 a.m. (r-9:30 p.m.); Solar Sports – Boston and Houston seek to go 2-0 against Indiana and Dallas, respectively.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Cage program shifts to PBA

By Musong R. Castillo

THE NATIONAL team program of the Basketball Association of the Philippines has been entrusted to the Philippine Basketball Association yesterday to make sure "the best players available" are tapped for international competitions.

With the RP-Cebuana Lhuillier national team officially disbanded as a result of the shift in the cage program, Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco gave the responsibility of choosing the coach for the coming SEABA and Southeast Asian Games tournaments to national mentor Chot Reyes.

Reyes is in the process of forming a team of PBA stars to compete in the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) championship in September under an agreement earlier forged between the BAP and the pro league.

"It's better that we start from scratch," said Cojuangco after announcing his decision to give the responsibility of ensuring the strongest possible team for the SEABA and SEAG to the PBA during a meeting of the recently formed basketball committee attended by officials of all the country's cage bodies.

Cojuangco warded off all pleas for consideration from the BAP, which was represented in the meeting by vice-president Christian Tan, director Lito Alvarez and legal counsel Boni Alentajan. Tan had pitched for retention of coach Boysie Zamar, the former UE Warrior in the UAAP, who has handled the Cebuana Lhuillier program since its inception. But Cojuangco turned that down along with the proposal of the BAP to include seven Philippine Basketball League standouts to the Cebuana Lhuillier team from Alvarez, who got to rattle off only two names before he was cut off by the POC president.

"Let us give the coach (Reyes) the opportunity to size up the team, the competition," Cojuangco said.

Under the new national team scheme, the members of the Cebuana Lhuillier squad will be included in Pool B of the PBA program, where they will be joined by players coming from the PBL, UAAP, NCAA and other collegiate leagues.

Pool A will be composed of the 20 PBA players now training to make it to the Asian championship, who can be tapped to reinforce the SEABA and the SEAG teams if necessary.

Reyes had earlier said he favored fielding the strongest team to the SEABA, where the top two finishers will qualify for the Asian championship. Tim Cone, coach of the RP Centennial team of PBA stars who placed third in the 1998 Asian Games, agreed with Reyes.

Cojuangco was of similar belief. "If we don't do well here (SEABA), I don't know how we will handle the Olympics," Cojuangco said.

Also present during the meeting held at the Cojuangco home in Dasmarinas Village were PBA commissioner Noli Eala, his PBL counterpart Chino Trinidad, Arben Santos, Joey Romasanta, Go Teng Kok, Moying Martelino, Jun Bernardino, Jean Henri Lhuillier and Danny Francisco.

Absent were BAP president Tiny Literal and Graham Lim, the association's sec-gen who is facing deportation charges. "I don't know where they are or why they are not here," Cojuangco said.

Ball is no longer in hands of BAP

By Francis Ochoa

THE VERDICT came with the cold finality of an execution.

The Basketball Association of the Philippines, the controversial national organization of the country's favorite sport, has had an ineffective program. And the diagnosis came no less from the BAP's erstwhile staunchest ally.

"Sad to say, your programs are no longer effective," said former BAP consultant Go Teng Kok, also the president of the athletics and chess associations. "We've had losses in athletics and swimming, but none as embarrassing as the ones in basketball."

And the powerful basketball committee seemed to nod in swooping agreement, putting the program of the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championships, and most probably the Southeast Asian Games, in the hands of PBA national coach Chot Reyes.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco wasn't as harsh, but he admitted that the committee, which he chairs, has pulled off one feat the BAP has failed to do.

"[We] brought all the players," Cojuangco said. "We have all the people involved in basketball. We have the PBA, we have the PBL."

The committee, which has effectively reduced the BAP to an approval body, started out with a self-imposed deadline as far as existence is concerned. But even Cojuangco admitted that he isn't closing the door on the possibility of the committee surviving past its published shelf life.

"We're really for the Seaba and the SEAG," Cojuangco said. "But it all depends on [the stakeholders]. If they feel that it's worthwhile to keep it running, then we'll keep it running."

"This is a good step in the right direction," said PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad of the committee. "It all boils down to leadership. With the kind of leadership Mr. Cojuangco has shown, you know that [the committee] is a good thing for basketball in this country."

"More than anything, it's been a unifying force," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala, noting that Cojuangco has managed to bring together parties who stood on different ends of the spectrum during a long-drawn battle for control of basketball's national sports association.

Asked what the committee could do differ-

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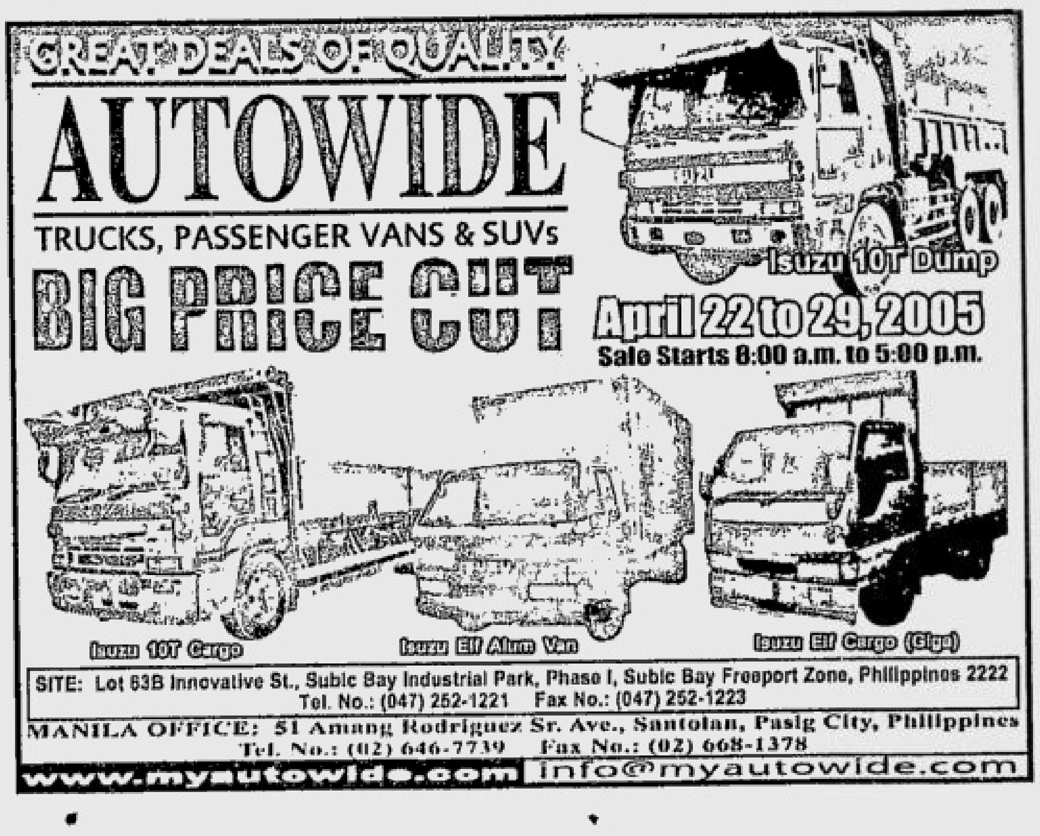

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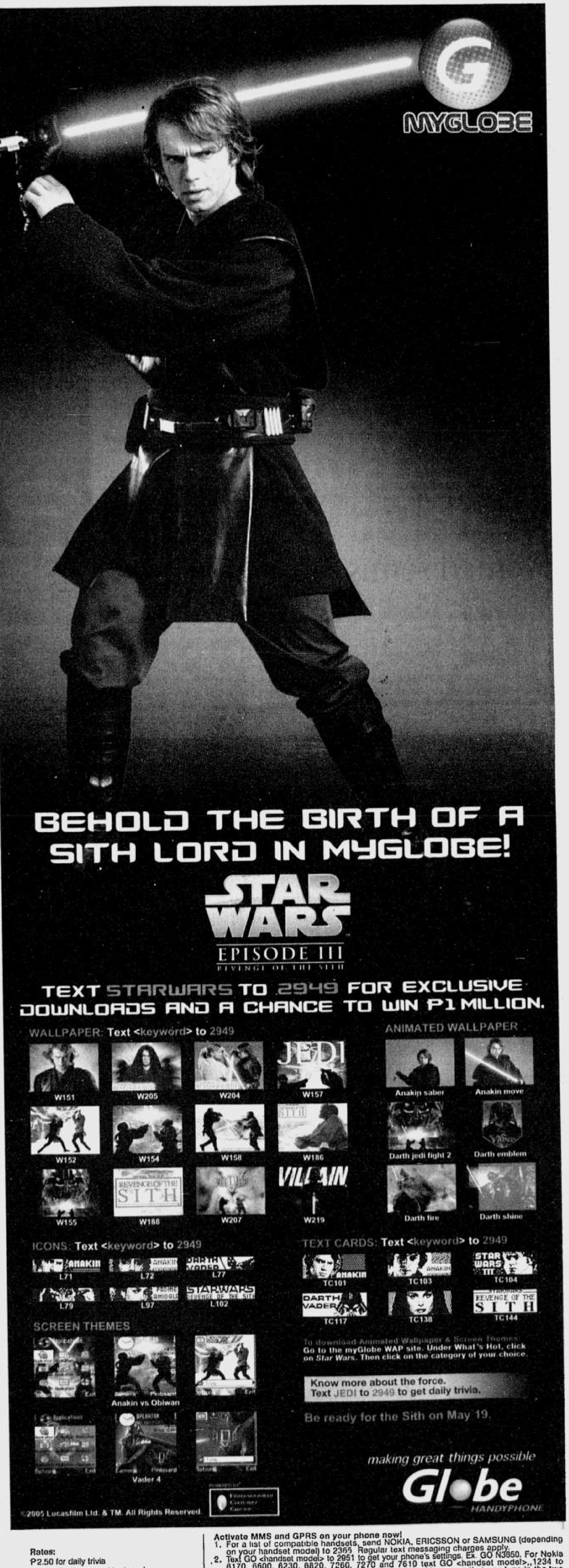
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Promo ends June 30, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit # 1265, Series of 2005.

Antonio tops Filway chess

ANTONIO: Back in form.

CEBU CITY—Grandmaster Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr. and Lennon Heart Salgados topped their respective divisions in the Filway-Timelife active chess championships Visayas leg held at the SM City Cebu over the weekend.

The 43-year-old Antonio trounced Merben Roque of Cebu City in 55 moves of a Sicilian Defense in the ninth and final round to win the elite Open class which lured 146 woodpushers nationwide.

Antonio finished with 8 points on seven wins and two draws to win the top purse of P30,000 in the National Chess Federation of the Philippines-sanctioned tournament sponsored by Filway Marketing Inc. CEO/ president Hector "Chito" O. Tagaysay. It was organized by NCFP tournament chair Wilfredo Abalos and Filway Vis-Min regional manager Nelson Verdote.

Antonio drew with the world's top ranked IM Mark Paragua in the seventh round and with Filway-Timelife Davao leg champion IM Idelfonso Datu of Caloocan City in the eight round.

Antonio is also scheduled to compete in the 2005 Michigan Open on May 14-16; the HB Global Chess Challenge on May 18-23 and Chicago Open on May 24-27.

Cebu pride IM Richard Bitoon took the measure of FIDE Master Oliver Dimakiling of Davao City after 45 moves of a Sicilian Defense to finish with 7.5 points and share second to fourth places with Paragua and GM Nelson Mariano II.

However, the former Southwestern University standout Bitoon took the runner-up spot in the tiebreak over Paragua and Mariano. The three received P10,000 each.

Meanwhile, Salgados posted sixth straight wins then settled for a draw in the seventh and final round against Ruel Canaveres of Panabo, Davao to rule the boys' 12-under division.

"This is for my dad Lynden," said Salgados.

In the Open section, making it to the top 16 were IM Datu, NM Rolando Nolte, IM Barlo Nadera, NM Emmanuel Senador, NM Rustum Tolentino, GM Eugene Torre, NM Rhobel Legaspi, Merben Roque, Anthony Makinano, Ramsey Pedrosa, Raymond Dela Pena and Nelson Villanueva.

Reigning ASEAN Vietnam gold medalists Jedara Docena of Tagbilaran, Bohol, topped the women's class to mark her 13th birthday.

She scored 5-out-of-6, the same output of five-time RP women's champion Woman International Master Cristine Rose Mariano, who lost in the tiebreak.

Jesa Balbona of Cebu City scored 5 points to top the girls' 12-and-under class. *Marlon Bernardino*

Women semis starts tomorrow

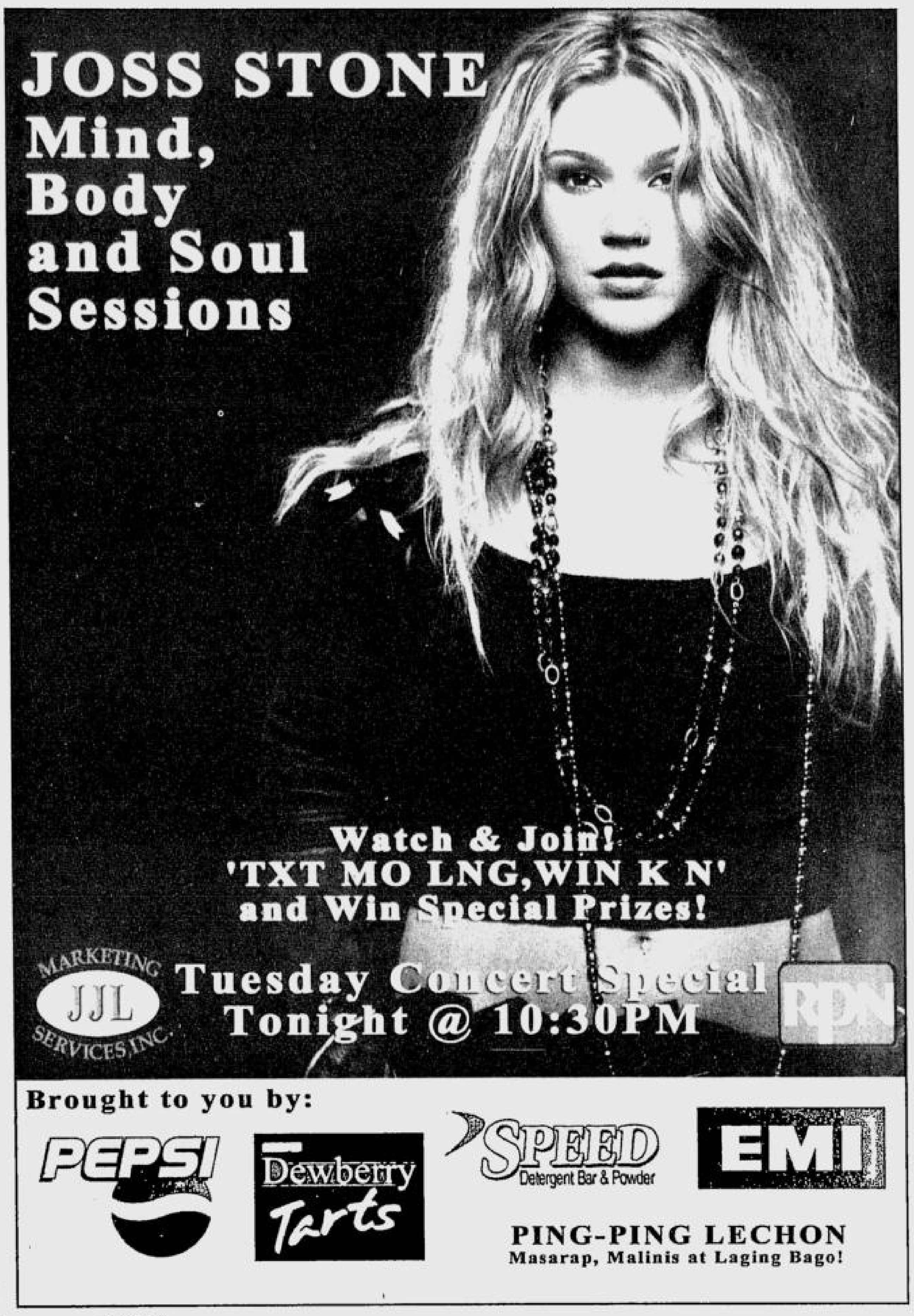
THE SEMIFINAL round of the 2005 National standard chess championship for women unfolds at 11 a.m. tomorrow at the Multi-Purpose Hall (5th floor), Marketplace shopping mall in Gen. Kalentong St., Mandaluyong City.

All Filipino lady chess players (titled or untitled) are expected to see action in this competition organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines.

The event will also be the basis for the selection of the members of the country's women's team for standard chess to the Southeast Asian Games the Philippines is hosting this November.

All players eligible to participate in the semifinals may register at the NCFP secretariat (435-1114) or call tournament director Willie Abalos (0921-6219898) for details.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor



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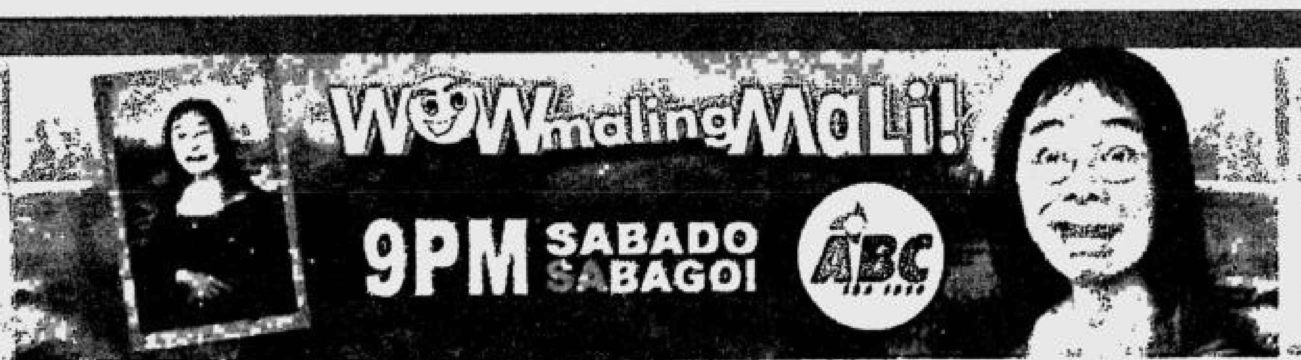
Tuesday, April 26, 2005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ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4:25 PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh! (5:10 PM)	Naruto (5:35 PM)	Vidjoking	TV Patrol World		Kamao	Hiram	Sports	Memories Of Bali	Stained Glass	Bora			Insider
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	EZ Shop	Anime Ring Kaisho				Sentro	Lizzie Maguire	Three Blind Dates		Wow Mali		Big News	The Probe Team Documentaries		Billboard On-Air	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Now and Forever	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Hungry Heart	Knockout	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Darna	All About Eve (8.45 PM)	Full House (9.15 PM)		Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Scare Tactics	The Ring	Cold Cases		Medium		Cold Case		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Treat		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Home Shopping Network		The Hope 1-Million All Filipino		Billiards Open	2005 Japan 9-Ball Festival		IBC News Tonite	Up Close And Personal	
JackTV		Wwe Raw				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Maxstool	Dungeons And Dragons	Stargate SG1		Soldier Of Fortune		RHD/LA		The Wire		Oz	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Combo Nick				Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Top Of The Pops	MYX Remakes	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Good Morning Miami	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	JKX	Simple Life	One Tree Hill		Temptation Island		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
Cinema One		Ano Ba Talaga Kuya				Pik Pak Boom				Antipolo Massacre				Di Pwedeng Hindi Pwede				Makuha Ko Sa Tingin	
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	Angel			Smallville		News Central	Oprah		The Men's Room
AXN		CSI: Miami		CSI: Miami		Fear Factor (Season V)		7 Days (Season III)		Pensacola (Season III)		Ripley's Believe It or Not		CSI NY (Season I)		The Amazing Race 7			
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Charmed		Wild Card		Miss Match		Friends	Charmed
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia About Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster		Interpol Investigates		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles, With Dr. Brady Barr	Wow				National Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation Deadly Delay/ Amazon Claws		Seconds From Disaster	
Solar Sports	The Badminton Masters '05 SFinals				WTA Dubai Duty Free Women's Open '05				Women's Volleyball '04				NBA TV Daily	NBA Playoffs First Round					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fixt	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Second Look		Look For Less	Life & Style		Clean House		Road & Track	Back To Basics
HBO			Her Alibi (3:20PM)			Our America			Torque (6:40PM)			Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle Of Life				Six Feet Under 45 Terror Starts At Home		Anger Management (10:50PM)	
Star Movies	Dawg			Long Time Dead (3.55 PM)			Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story				Johnny English			Snow Dogs			Agent Cody Banks		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Gundam Wing	Shaman King	The Powerpuff Girls	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Gundam Seed
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Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Buzz Lightyear Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	Wonderful World Of Disney	
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Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Just Cause		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	Bewitched	The District		Just Cause		Betrayed			Missing (10:35PM)		The District (11.25PM)
Discovery Channel		Civilisations				Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Science Mysteries	
Sports Plus						Golf Globe 2002	You've Got to See This	Raceworld		Strongman		World's Greatest Auto Shows		Italia Serie A				Nopi Tunerversion	Bikini Destination
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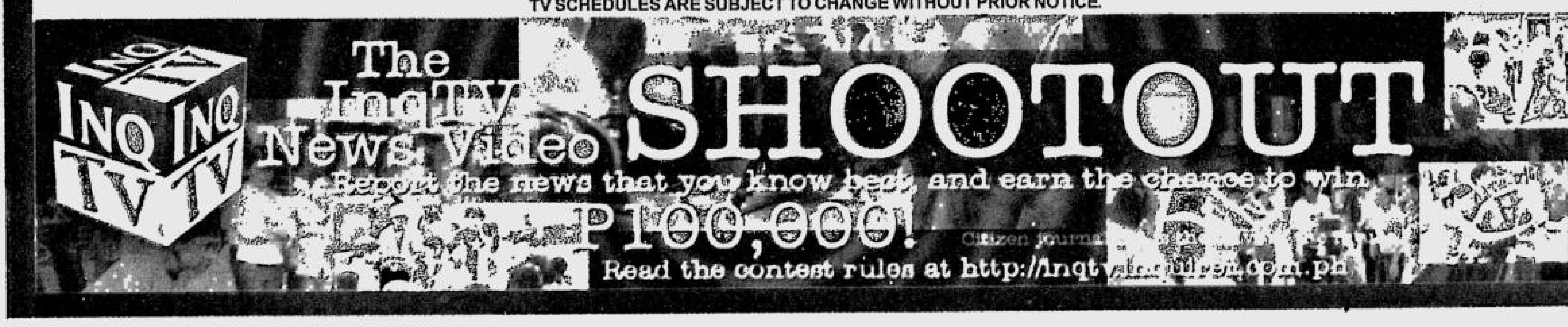
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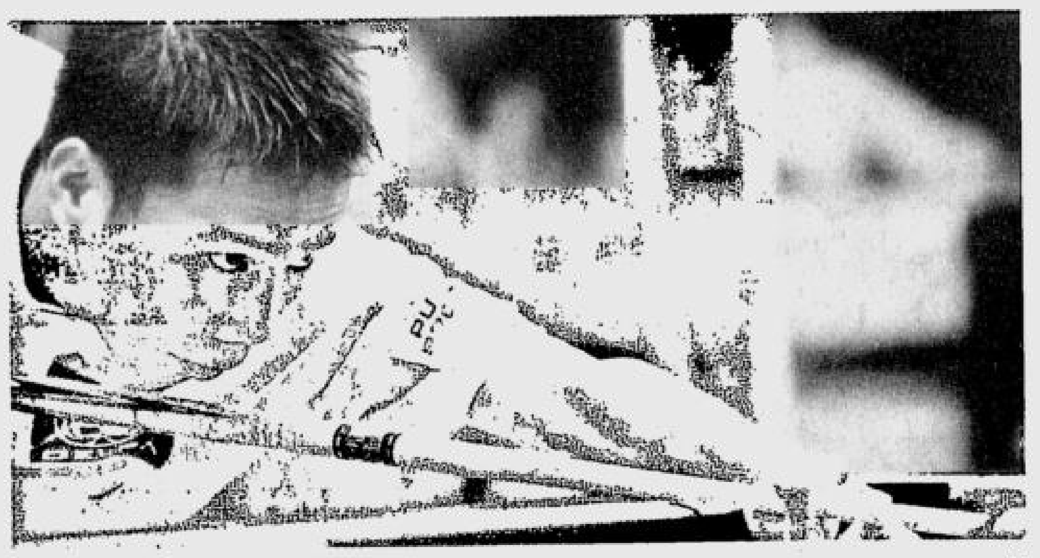

PAGULAYAN resumes winning ways. AP

Pagulayan bags ₱.5M in Canada

REIGNING world pool champion Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan defeated ex-world titlist American Earl "The Pearl" Strickland, 15-10, to bag the $10,000 champion's purse in the recent SML Entertainment 9-Ball Championship in Calgary, Canada, over the weekend.

Going to the championship round, the native of Cabagan, Isabela, and now residing in Toronto, Canada, disposed of Mike Yancowski, Eldon Gauthier, Mike Vidas, Craig Kerry, Fil-Canadian Edwin Montal and Danny Basavich.

Strickland forced Pagulayan in a rematch via an 11-3 victory over Brady Gollan in the one loss side.

Strickland settled for $6000 in prize money. Tyler Edey earned $1000 in bonus money for being the top finishing player from Calgary.

Meanwhile, Billiard and Snooker Congress of the Philippines president Ernesto "Ernie" Fajardo lauded Pagulayan's triumph.

"It shows that we really have a good chance of winning in the SEA Games," said Fajardo, noting the recent international victories of Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Gandy "Sapsal" Valle, Warren "Warrior" Kiamco and Ramil "Bebeng" Gallego.

Aristeo "Putch" G. Puyat, the acknowledged godfather of Philippine billiards, announced earlier that Pagulayan will carry the national flag in the 2005 Manila Southeast Asian Games after the Bureau of Immigration approved the dual citizenship of Pagulayan, who grew up in Taguig City.

Reyes and Valle topped the first two legs of the SMB Asian 9-ball tour. Reyes, along with Kiamco and Gallego, also won in the 9-ball tournament in Japan. Bustamante topped the Bali, Indonesia, 9-ball tour.

Marlon Bernardino

De Asis, Yambao rule Global race

JUJET de Asis and Liza Yambao found little resistance in ruling the first Bonifacio Global City Summer Run Sunday in Taguig City.

De Asis clocked in at 31 minutes and 33 seconds to claim the men's 10K run while Yambao completed the 10K course in 38 minutes and 40 seconds to top the distaff side.

De Asis of the Philippine Army pulled away in the last 4 km to win P4,000 cash and P6,000 gift certificate.

Hernani Sore settled for second place at 32:12 while veteran runner Reynaldo delos Reyes placed third at 32:25.

Yambao, the 2003 Milo Marathon National champion, led the race all the way in the women's 10K race of the first Global City Summer Run held in partnership with Adidas.

"I was fortunate my coach allowed me to run," said Yambao, who is a member of the Philippine training pool slated to compete in the 10K and 5K events of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games in November.

Placing second to Yambao was Hazel Madamba who was timed at 39:04. Joanne Managat was third at 41:37.

In the 3K age-group category, Jonas Sugalan dominated the 10-12 years old category while Michael Seville bagged the 6-9 plum.

The 5K age-group winners were Marjohn Salanawon and Bernadette Magaso in the 14-29; Allyson Reyes and Shirlene Sia in the 30-49; and Jacob Cruz and Luz Encarnacion in the 50-above.

The winners in the 3K and 5K races got P3,000 cash purse and P6,000 worth of gift certificates each.

Curtan, Estayo 1st Velo Challenge frontrunners

VETERAN Paterno Curtan and Tagaytay City's Nilo Estayo hold the top two slots in the men's Elite and Jan Paul Morales also of Tagaytay and Jerwin Torres of MayniLA lead in Juniors as the First Velo Challenge hits its seventh day of racing beginning at 9 a.m. today at the Amoranto Velodrome.

Curtan, a bemedalled Southeast Asian Games track specialist, has 37 points on three gold, two silver and four bronze medals to lead the category in the event co-presented by the First Gentleman's Foundation and Air21 (Sagot Ko, Padala Mo!)-Tour Pilipinas Inc.

Estayo, running under Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino's team, has a 4-3-0 gold-silver-bronze performance for a second-running 35 points, shoving the injured Paulo Mapanul, who is hanging on at third with 34 points in the event also supported by Pagcor, the Philippine Sports Commission and Philippine Olympic Committee, Isuzu D-Max (the Philippines' No. 1 Pickup), Sharp Phils., San Miguel Corp.-Viva Mineral Water, Vittoria Tires, 93.9 iFM, RMN dzXL 558, David's Salon and Intrasports and aired over dzSR Sports Radio 918 khz.

Morales has 5-0-1 haul for 32 points, two points ahead of Torres, who has so far garnered two gold, four silver and one bronze medals in the Velo Challenge that is part of the cyclists' preparation for the 23rd Southeast Asian Games and sanctioned by PhilCycling.

Ahead in the women's Elite is Marites Bitbit with an 8-1-0 (G-S-B) for 44 points, while Edilberto Lantin leads the Executives' category with 1-4-1 for 28 points, Gerardo Amar the Veterans' class with 4-2-1 for 31 points and Virgilio Valenzuela the Masters' division with 4-2-0 for 29 points.

Quezon City heads the local government units teams with 9-15-11 gold-silver-bronze for 181 points, followed by Puerto Princesa City with 10-14-13 for 180, MayniLA with 9-12-13 for 177 and Tagaytay International Convention Center with 10-5-3 for 98.

DIAGON HOBIE Cup Winners. Rookie sailor Michael Ngu of the Manila Doctors Hospital and Asian Games veteran Nestor Soriano (third and fourth from left) copped top honors in the maiden staging of the Diagon Cup held at the Taal Lake Yacht Club in Talisay, Batangas. Also shown are (from left) Monchu Garcia of San Mig Pub and Restaurant, Gabriele Boschi of Rudy Project Eyewear, Evangeline San Jose-Giorgetti and Sergio Giorgetti of Diagon Awards.

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Promo ends June 30, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit # 1265, Series of 2005.

Roddick cops third US Clay Court diadem

HOUSTON, Texas—Top seed Andy Roddick captured his third ATP US Clay Court Championship in five years here Sunday, defeating France's sixth-seeded Sebastien Grosjean 6-2, 6-2 in the final.

RODDICK AP

The 22-year-old American, playing in his fifth consecutive final here, had previously won in 2001 and 2002.

"It's my mom's company at dinner, maybe," said Roddick, who improved 23-2 in clay court matches here. "I have always felt very comfortable here."

The title was Roddick's second of the year following a February crown at San Jose. It came in a $380,000 red clay event that was his first appearance since withdrawing from a second-round match at Key Biscayne with a wrist sprain.

"I felt good, felt like I was really strong with my forehand," Roddick said. "I put a lot of pressure on him with that shot." Roddick improved to 5-1 lifetime over Grosjean, who had won their lone prior meeting on clay in a 2002 Davis Cup semifinal match at Roland Garros.

Roddick broke Grosjean's serve twice in the opening set to open a 4-1 lead.

In the second, Roddick broke the Frenchman in the third game before cruising to his 23rd win in his last 27 matches.

"Against the top guys, if you don't hold your serve and you're behind early, they don't let you in," Grosjean said. *AFP*

Nadal wrests 4th title of the year in Spain

BARCELONA—Rafael Nadal produced another devastating exhibition of claycourt tennis to sweep aside former world number one Juan Carlos Ferrero 6-1, 7-6, 6-3 in the Barcelona Open final on Sunday.

The 18-year-old Spaniard claimed his fourth ATP title of the year, following on from Monte Carlo last week when he became the youngest winner of a Masters Series event in 15 years.

Ferrero, in his first final since losing to Lleyton Hewitt in Rotterdam in February 2004, put up some stiff opposition in the second set but Nadal was in irresistible form to wrap up victory in straight sets.

"I'm delighted and feel incredibly happy with what have been an amazing two months," said Nadal, who is a serious contender for next month's French Open having also claimed titles in Brazil and Mexico earlier this year.

The victory gave Nadal a 25-2 record on clay this year and moved him level with world number one Roger Federer's 35 victories this season.

It also assured that he would break into the world's top 10 for the first time when the new ATP rankings are released on Monday.

"It's brilliant to be ranked number seven in the world as early as April and it's been a dream come true to win here and in Monte Carlo. It's been a fantastic two weeks," he said.

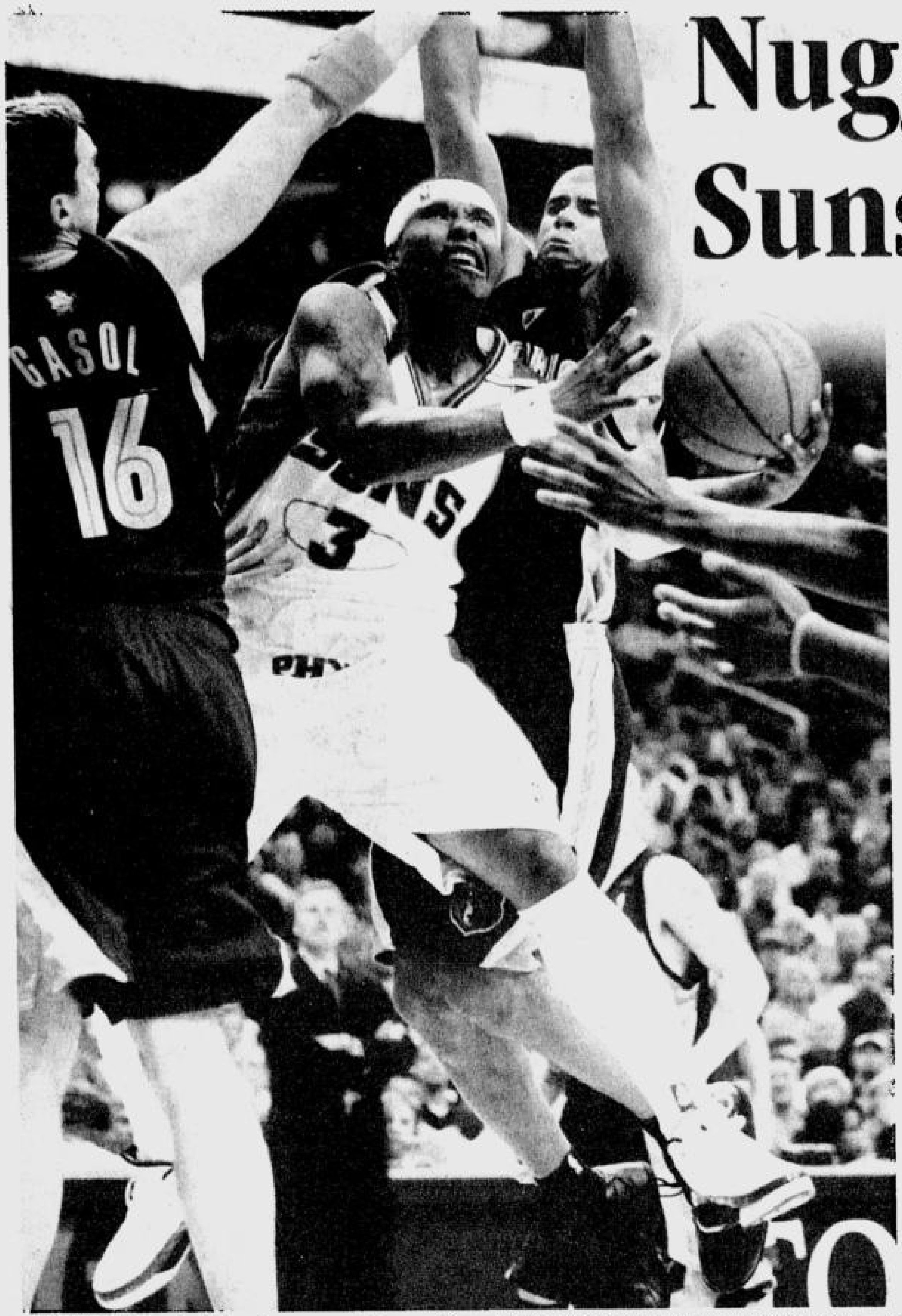
The teenager is also looking to become the first player this year to win the doubles and singles at the same tournament when he and partner Feliciano Lopez meet Leander Paes and Nenad Zimonjic in the doubles final.

Nadal, who beat Ferrero 6-2, 6-1 in the first round in Valencia earlier this month, was given a tougher test this time.

Ferrero, who reached the semi-finals in Monte Carlo and knocked out French Open champion Gaston Gaudio on his way to the final in Barcelona, put Nadal under heavy pressure in the opening games with his punchy ground strokes.

But the Mallorcan stepped up a gear midway through the set and broke at the fifth attempt in a marathon 19-minute fourth game and then again in the sixth.

"Nadal's in great form at the moment," admitted Ferrero. "I played well apart from making a few errors on crucial points." *Reuters*



THE SUNS' Quentin Richardson goes up between Shane Battier (right) and Pau Gasol of the Grizzlies. AFP

Nuggets sh Suns, Heat

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Marcus C by and the Denver Nuggets shut d Tim Duncan and San Antonio Sun surprising the Spurs, 93-87, in G One of their National Basketball A ciation Western Conference f round playoff series.

Camby held two-time Most Valuable P Duncan scoreless in the fourth quarter as th enth-seeded Nuggets won a road playoff for the first time in 11 years. In the process beat the Spurs on a court where they had w of 41 regular-season games.

Andre Miller scored 31 points as Denver home-court advantage from the second-se Spurs, who looked nothing like the favori the NBA championship.

Duncan missed 12 games late in the s due to a sprained ankle. He was not a strength and wilted against Denver's fleet men, most notably Camby, who had 12 poin rebounds and four blocks.

"We felt confident," Camby said. "Ever thought that the Spurs would run through u everyone is talking about the Spurs vs the Su the conference finals. This team has a lot of and a lot of pride."

Second in the NBA in blocked shots, C helped harass Duncan into 7-of-22 sho Three of those misses came in the final m when the Spurs needed a basket from the perstar.

The Spurs scored just six points in the 10min 20sec.

"There were a lot of shots around the b that I should have made," Duncan said. "We just missing our shots tonight. I felt like we some great looks."

Manu Ginobili scored a playoff career-hi points and Duncan added 18 and 11 rebo for San Antonio, which hosts game tw Wednesday.

There were no surprises in Phoenix, whe Star point guard Steve Nash directed the Su a 114-103 victory over Memphis in the first

Singh tops Houston tilt after playoff with Daly

HUMBLE, Texas—Vijay Singh waited patiently for a break in the final round of the Houston Open. John Daly finally gave him a big one on the first extra hole.

Taking advantage of Daly's playoff drive that skipped into the water, Singh overcame putting problems and a long birdie drought to win the tournament for the second straight year and third time in four years.

"I'm really pleased with the way I hung in there and never gave up," Singh said. "Fortunately for me nobody came out of the pack except for John and kind of made a run at it. It was a good way to finish."

Daly, who birdied the final two holes for a 5-under 67 to match Singh at 13-under 275, sent his drive on the first extra hole, the par-4 18th, into the water. Then, after a drop, Daly sent his third over the green.

"I'm proud of myself for coming back like that and hitting some shots when I needed to," Daly said. "I wished I could have done better in the playoff."

Singh, who had only two birdies in his closing 70, calmly made a par for his 26th US PGA Tour victory and second of the year.

The 42-year-old Fijian earned $900,000 (euro688,230) to pass Tiger Woods for second place on the money list with $3,836,413 (euro2,933,710), just $6,043 (euro4,620) behind leader Phil Mickelson. Singh also pushed his career total to $40.5 million (euro30 million), second only to Woods.

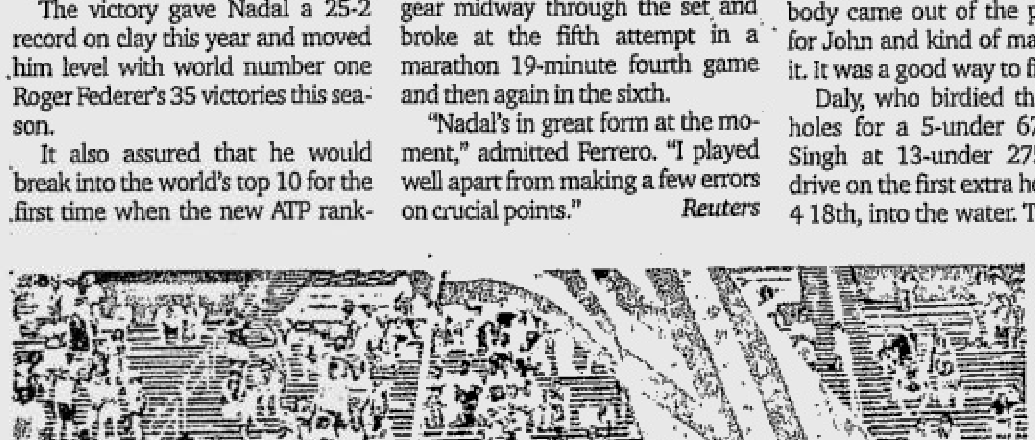
Spain's Jose Maria Olazabal (70) finished third at 11 under, and Northern Ireland's Darren Clarke (67) and Englishman Greg Owen (72) tied for fourth at 10 under.

Joe Oglivie (71) was next at 9 under, followed by six players at 8 under, including third-round co-leader Gavin Coles (75) and Jeff Maggert (71), who has finished second at this event three times.

Singh, recently elected to the World Golf Hall of Fame, couldn't slam the door on Daly in regulation when his birdie attempt at 18 rolled just past the cup after a brilliant approach from the far right side to 8 feet of the flag.

"I obviously thought Vijay would hit it in on 18," Daly said. "You don't ever want anybody to miss a putt, but it was nice to get in a playoff to have another chance to win." *AP*

SINGH: Waited patiently for a break


FROM left: United States' Venus Williams, captain Zina Garrison, Corina Morariu, Serena Williams and Lindsay Davenport after defeating Belgium during the Fed Cup Quarterfinals. AP

FED CUP

Russia-US semis clash

LONDON—Elena Dementieva saved four match points against Italy's Francesca Schiavone on Sunday to guide champions Russia into a tantalizing Fed Cup semifinal against the United States.

France, beaten by Russia in last year's final, also recovered from a disappointing opening day to beat Austria 4-1 and reach the last four where they will play Spain in July.

World number one Lindsay Davenport completed a clinical US victory against a below-strength Belgium team, claiming a 6-4, 6-0 victory over Els Callens to give her country an unassailable 3-0 lead before Venus Williams beat Leslie Butkiewicz 6-1, 6-4.

Belgium's former world number ones Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin-Hardenne were both missing from the tie.

"We all thought after Saturday that we had the tie wrapped up, so it's hard to come out and play well," said Davenport, who is 28-2 in Fed Cup.

"We were all talking about playing Russia this morning, so I just had to get us through.

"We're all committed to it (the Fed Cup) and we need all the best players we can get," added Davenport, who said she has received a commitment from the Williams sisters despite them not playing an away Fed Cup tie since 1999. *Reuters*

Britain intensifies search f next Wimby men, women

LONDON—Britain has turned to the world of business and commerce in its latest bid to unearth a Wimbledon champion.

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), the governing body of tennis in Britain, has appointed BUPA chief executive Val Gooding and Guardian Media Group chief executive Bob Phillis to its board.

The LTA said the appointments were the final stage in a "far-reaching program of measures to modernize" its structure and streamline the way it managed the sport.

Britain has not enjoyed a men's Wimbledon champion since Fred Perry in 1936 and a British woman has not won the most prestigious title in the sport since Virginia Wade triumphed in 1977.

However the LTA said it had now created a "culture of perfor-

Sosa homers twice as Orioles complete sweep of Blue Jays

TORONTO—Sammy Sosa hit a pair of home runs as the Baltimore Orioles completed a three-game series sweep of the reeling Toronto Blue Jays with a 7-1 win in American League play on Sunday.

It was Sosa's first multi-homer game since joining the Orioles in an off-season trade and the 67th of his career, third on the all-time list behind Babe Ruth (72) and Barry Bonds (68).

The veteran slugger now has four home runs this season and 578 in total as the Orioles exploded for 24 runs in the three-game series after arriving in Toronto following shutouts in consecutive games by the Boston Red Sox.

Sidney Ponson (3-1) also pitched his 28th career complete game and first of the season with a two-out ninth-inning RBI single by Reed Johnson spoiling his shutout bid.

He allowed five hits with seven strikeouts and four walks, and retired the first 14 hitters he faced.

Sosa had three of Baltimore's 14 hits while Melvin Mora also homered and scored two runs. Miguel Tejada added two hits and two RBIs for the Orioles and Brian Roberts had two hits, an RBI and scored a run. *Reuters*

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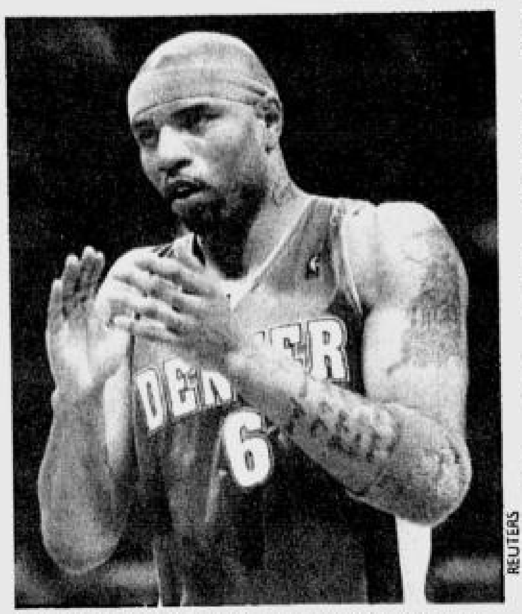

NUGGETS' Kenyon Martin leaves the court.

REUTERS

of their Western Conference series.

Nash handed out 13 assists and scored 11 points amid chants of "MVP" from the Phoenix faithful. Shawn Marion had 26 points, 13 rebounds and one frightening fall for the top-seeded Suns, who pressed as hard as they did in the regular season, when they led the NBA in scoring (110 points per game) and wins (62).

The eighth-seeded Grizzlies found no way to slow the Suns down.

Phoenix ran at every opportunity, scoring 25 fast-break points and sinking 15-of-32 three-pointers. They had five players in double figures, including reserve center Steven Hunter, who scored a playoff career-high 16 points.

Quentin Richardson scored 22 points and Joe Johnson added 16 for the Suns, who host game two on Wednesday.

In the East, three time NBA Finals MVP Shaquille O'Neal's Miami Heat lived up to their top seeding, defeating the New Jersey Nets 116-98 in their series opener.

In a series featuring O'Neal, Jason Kidd and Vince Carter, it was Dwyane Wade and Damon Jones who stole the spotlight.

With O'Neal opening things up on the perimeter for Miami, Wade—an All-Star in just his second season—scored a playoff career-high 32 points, doing a majority of his damage against Kidd. He also handed out eight assists.

Jones, a journeyman shooting guard, benefited from the double-teams on O'Neal. He scored a playoff career-high 30 points, making seven three-pointers.

O'Neal was a game-time decision after missing five of the last eight regular-season games with a stomach ailment and bruised thigh.

He had consecutive dunks to start the contest and collected 17 points and 11 rebounds in 32 minutes.

"I knew I wasn't going to be the regular playoff diesel that America is used to," said O'Neal, who averaged 36.3 points when he helped the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Nets in the 2002 Finals.

"I didn't have that explosiveness, that firecracker explosiveness. If the team plays like this with a 40 percent Shaq, imagine what we'll do as I improve."

In Chicago, the Bulls rallied for a 103-94 victory over Washington in their Eastern Conference opener.

The Bulls used their familiar formula of tough defense and timely offense from Ben Gordon, who scored in double digits in the fourth quarter 21 times during a spectacular rookie season.

The Bulls also got a huge effort from rookie Andres Nocioni, who had career highs of 25 points and 18 rebounds.

Gilbert Arenas, Washington's All-Star guard who averaged better than 30 points in three games against Chicago this season, was held to nine and missed seven shots as he went scoreless in the fourth.

The Bulls, playing their first playoff game since Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen led the Bulls to their sixth NBA title in eight years in 1998, trailed by five points entering the fourth quarter before a 10-2 surge that gave Chicago the lead for good. *AFP*

AFP

Koch captures Corona crown; Delasin fifth

MORELIA, Mexico—Sweden's Carin Koch fired a one-under par 71 here Sunday for a six-stroke victory at the LPGA Corona Morelia Championship as top rival Wendy Ward soared to a final-round 78.

Fil-Am Dorothy Delasin landed fifth after a 70 and a 287 total. Her earlier rounds were 71-78-68.

Koch captured only her second US LPGA crown, her first since the 2001 Corning Classic, despite an inconsistent round of five birdies and four bogeys that left her on nine-under par 279 after 72 holes at the one million-dollar event.

France's Karine Icher was second on 285, one stroke ahead of Britain's Cartiona Matthew and Ward, who had started the day tied with Koch atop the leaderboard.

Koch, 34, followed a birdie at the third with a bogey at the fourth. She had back-to-back birdies on six and seven but began the back nine with two bogeys to jeopardize her chances.

"It was a little nervous feeling," she admitted. "Whenever I thought I had a chance to pull away from Wendy I missed sort of short putts that would have helped a lot during the middle of the round.

"I tried not to pay too much attention to what anyone else was doing, but think about what I was doing and my game." Three pars and a birdie at the 15th righted Koch, who took another bogey at 17 but finished with a birdie to complete the victory.

"I am so excited," she said. "You get your first win and that is great, but it is so nice to know you can do it again.

"I played really good golf this week. I worked hard this winter and last year. It is so nice when it pays off." Koch had squandered a three-stroke lead Saturday with three bogeys over the final 11 holes to fall level with Ward, who won last week's Takefuji Classic at Las Vegas to end a four-year title drought.

Icher got off to a rocky start with back-to-back bogeys on three and four. She birdied the next three before a double-bogey at the par-four 10th, then picked up three more shots at 11, 13 and 16.

While the runner-up finish was a morale booster, it also had a more concrete positive effect in that Icher, who has conditional status on the US LPGA tour, won't have to go through Monday qualifying to play at the upcoming Franklin American Mortgage Championship, which starts in Tennessee next Thursday.

"It is a big help for me because I was scheduled to play the Monday qualifier tomorrow, and now and I do not have to play." *AFP*

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British tennis. *Reuters*

SAN FRANCISCO Giants' Ray Durham avoids a horizontal Brady Clark of the Milwaukee Brewers.

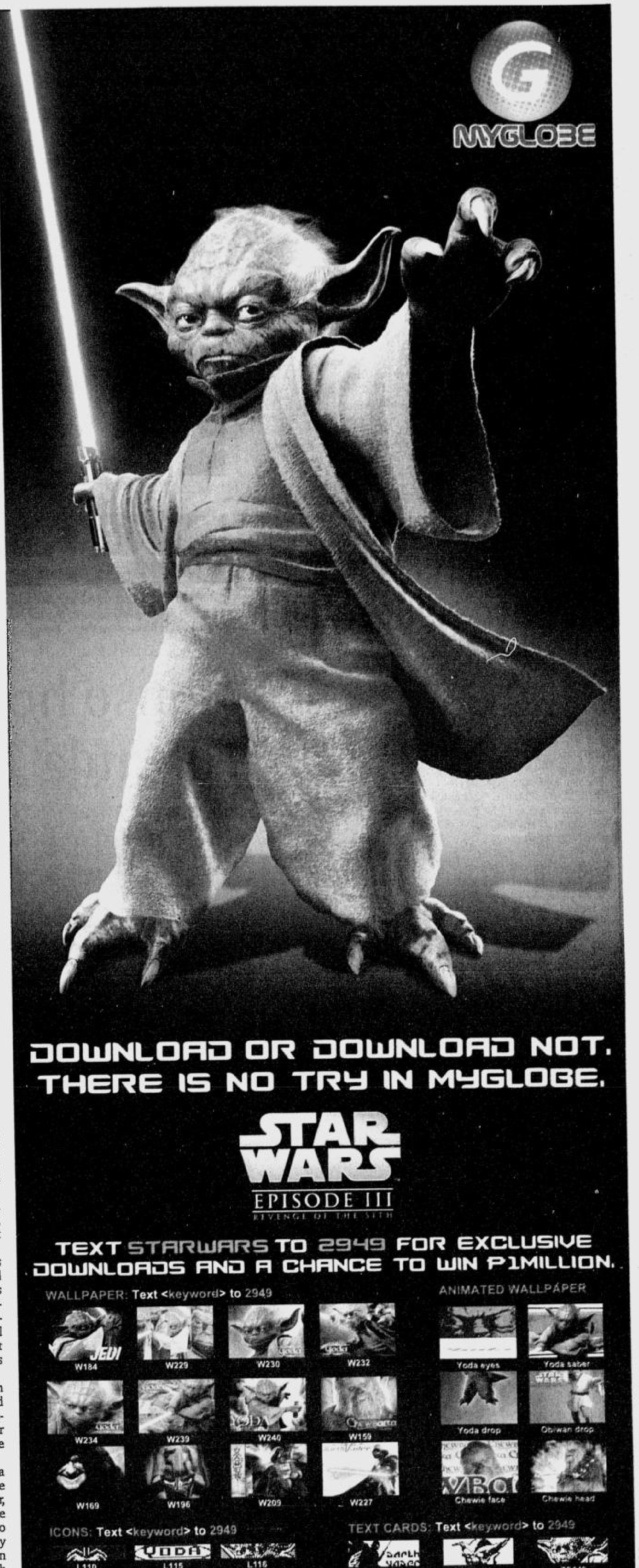
AP

Lance settles for 5th place

ALPHARETTA, Georgia—With his focus firmly on the Tour de France, Lance Armstrong was just another cyclist in the peloton helping to ensure that a teammate won the Tour de Georgia on Sunday.

Tom Danielson was surrounded by his Discovery Channel team as he maintained his 4-second advantage over Levi Leipheimer, content to cruise across the line behind stage winner Gord Fraser of Canada.

Armstrong, wearing No. 1 on the back of his jersey, settled for 22nd place on the day and fifth overall. He was 1 minute, 42 seconds behind Danielson, a 27-year-old former mountain biker who joined the team this season. *AP*



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Promo ends June 30, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit # 1265, Series of 2005.

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Suico, Thai foe weigh-in today

CEBU—The official weigh-in for tomorrow's Oriental and Pacific Boxing Federation (OPBF) title showdown between junior lightweight champion Randy Suico against challenger Muangfahlek Kiatwichean of Thailand is set today at the newly built Wakee Salud Gym in Labangon.

Promoter Rex "Wakee" Salud said all protagonists will be present for the weigh-in starting at 1 p.m. which will also serve as the inauguration of his well-furnished boxing gym.

Games and Amusements Board boxing division chief Emmanuel "Noli" Flores, who will supervise tomorrow's hostilities, will also oversee today's weigh-in together with officials of GAB-7.

The dynamite-fisted Suico will stake his OPBF crown for the fourth time against Thai challenger in a 12-round war headlining the "Kadaugan sa Mactan 3" card.

Reigning Ring Magazine featherweight king Manny Pacquiao and Games and Amusements Board chairman Eric Buhain are slated to grace the Suico-Kiatwichean showdown. Also set to attend are GAB commissioners Angel Bautista and Alex Paglumotan.

In the chief supporting bout, World Boxing Association No. 1 strawweight Yukka Gejon of Wakee Salud Stable takes on Thailand's Namchai Thaksinisan in a 10-round non-title clash.

Gejon is set to vie for the WBA title sometime late this year.

Other bouts pit Louie Bantigue against William Macas (8 rounds); Gabriel Pumar versus Emer Barrientos (8); Alex Aroy against Allan Dugang (8); Apol Suico versus Dodong Salde (4); Jomar Matbagon against Alvin Mundala (4) and Bryan Rosal versus Jun Canamo (4). Salven Lagumbay

Jaro targets WBC int'l flyweight title

PHILIPPINE junior flyweight champion Sonny Boy Jaro guns for the vacant World Boxing Council International flyweight title against International Boxing Organization flyweight kingpin Mhikiza Myekeni this Friday at the Graceland Hotel Casino and Country Club in Mpumalanga, South Africa.

The Jaro-Myekeni fight is the other half of the "Double Championship" card promoted by Branco Milenkovic and Baby Jake Matlala of Branco Sports Productions.

Topping the doubleheader is the South African welterweight championship between title-holder Joseph "Smokin' Joe" Makaringe against mandatory challenger Welcome Ntshingila.

Makaringe has a 26-2 win-loss record with 21 KOs while his rival has 10 victories against three losses and a draw.

"In light of the recent sequence of exceptional match-ups for Hawk Makepula and Gabula Vabaza against tough Filipino opponents to satisfy the criteria for SABC Sport, it was decided to match Myekeni with another top Asian contender," the promoters said.

Myekeni has won 18 times in 20 fights while the vastly improved Jaro from Manila owns a 17-2-3 (win-loss-draw record.

Jaro, a native of Silay City, won the Philippine 108-lb title with an earth-shaking second-round technical knockout over

Jojo Bardon in San Carlos City last February.

Myekeni has been inactive since September last year when he bowed to Mzukisi Sikali for the IBO flyweight title. Salven Lagumbay

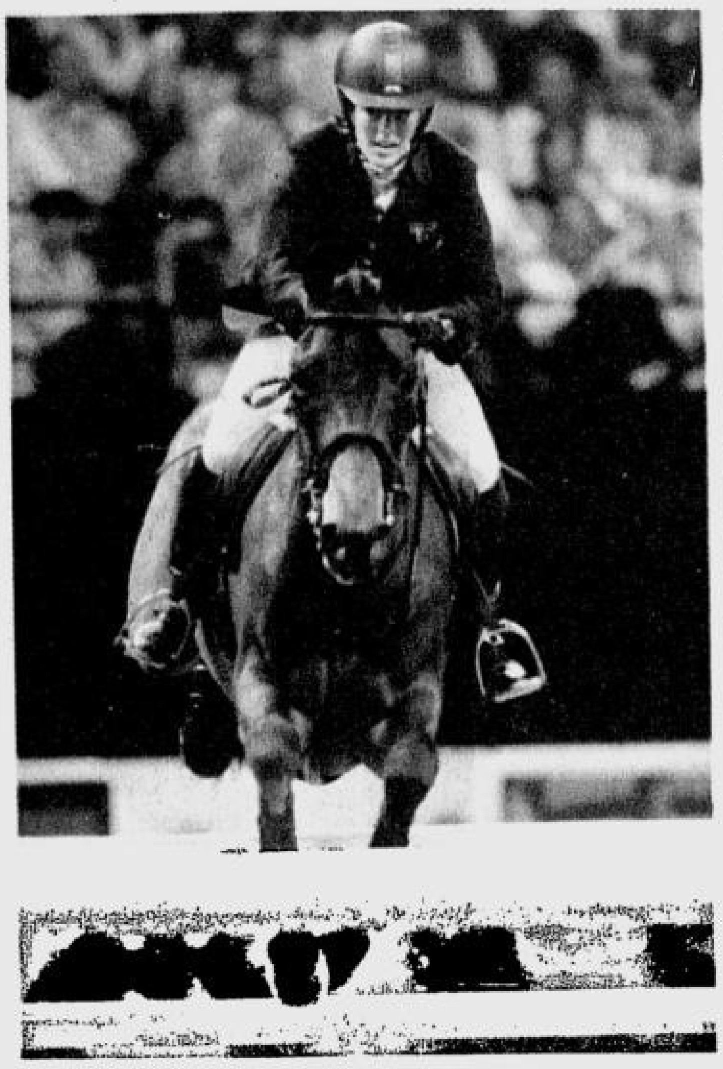
Batawang to battle Gonzales on Friday

PAN-AFRICAN junior flyweight champion Bert Batawang fights a dangerous Eugene Gonzales this Friday with an eye on a possible unification bout with Pan-Asia Boxing Association junior fly king Vicky Tahumil of Indonesia.

WBA no. 7 Bert Batawang is calling out Pan-Asia Boxing Association junior fly boss Vicky Tahumil of Indonesia in a winner-take-all 12-round battle to decide who will be the next challenger for the vacant WBA title.

Batawang, the World Boxing Association No. 7 contender, and former Philippine junior fly champion Gonzales will clash in the main supporting bout for the World Boxing Foundation title encounter between Filipino welterweight king Dindo Castañares and Australian Steven Marks.

Should Batawang get past Gonzales, he may meet Tahumil, the WBA No. 3, for the right to challenge for the vacant WBA jr flyweight title. Salven Lagumbay



JUMP CHAMP: Germany's Meredith Michaels Beerbaum clears a jump on her horse Shutterfly during the Budweiser FEI World Cup Jumping Final in Las Vegas, Nevada, April 24. She won the event.

REUTERS

Alonso hottest Formula 1 guy

IMOLA, Italy—Two seasons ago, Kimi Raikkonen was getting all the accolades as the next big thing in Formula One, finishing second behind Michael Schumacher in the standings.

Now, after his third straight victory in Sunday's San Marino Grand Prix, Fernando Alonso is in that position.

Raikkonen was set Sunday to change things but suffered a mechanical problem.

After establishing his fourth career pole position Sunday morning—maintaining his lead from Saturday's first qualifying session—the Finnish driver was forced to abandon the race with a driveshaft problem after eight laps.

Raikkonen got off to a good start in his McLaren-Mercedes, holding off Alonso through the first turns, but he slowed midway through his ninth lap, allowing Alonso to take the lead.

Raikkonen continued around the track at minimal speed, drove into the pits, and retired.

"Obviously I am disappointed as I had a great start and was really building on my lead," Raikkonen said. "At least we know that the car has the pace in both qualifying as well as the race. With some improvements due for Spain in two weeks I am looking forward to a good race."

Raikkonen started with an eighth-place result in Australia last month. He was ninth in the Malaysian GP and came third in Bahrain three weeks ago. AP

RACING TIPS

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Loving Thunder 2. Big Bucks 3. She Boom 4. Awesome Power
Race 2—1. Ichiro 2. Take Ten 3. Order of Merit 4. That's My Tiger
Race 3—1. King Size 2. Close Account 3. Dulce My Love 4. Juara
Race 4—1. Tiger Winnie 2. Speed Mountain 3. Blue Bolero 4. West Swinger 5. Society Girl
Race 5—1. Silver Dollar 2. Super Shuttle 3. Cash McCall 4. Silent Operator/Extreme Magic
Race 6—1. Suonos 2. Sacred Hall 3. Glamour 4. Alexi's Magic
Race 7—1. La Española 2. Love Triangle 3. Long Road 4. Last Dance
Race 8—1. Feng Shui 2. En Carta 3. Going Strike 4. Sgt. Marangal 5. Swing Till Dawn 6. Sea of Galilee

Sorry loss for Galido in Istanbul

VETERAN Reynaldo Galido lost by a point in a bout officials of Team Philippines said the Filipino clearly won Saturday at the start of the Ahmet Comert International boxing championships in Istanbul, Turkey.

And with Warlito Parrenas going down to another hometown bet, the RP squad was down to five men in the tough event that attracted 181 male fighters and 127 female ringsters from 23 nations.

Galido lost to Turkey's Adem by the skin of his teeth in the welterweight division, 17-18, while Warlito Parrenas absorbed a 27-22 decision from another Turk, Aydenir, in the flyweight class.

Filipino coaches Boy Velasco and Vicente Arsenal and team leader Liberato Reyna said the ouster of Galido, which elicited howls and jeers from the Turkish boxing fans, was a bitter pill to swallow.

Galido, who fought in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics as a light welterweight, was in complete command of the four-round bout right from the opening bell, staggering his rival with solid body blows and crisp combinations to the face.

The Turk was able to counterpunch at times but the judges still gave Galido's foe the nod in the end.

"*Ganyan talaga ang boxing. Akala natin panalo tayo pero ang tingin ng mga* judges, *talo* (That's boxing. While we feel we won, the judges often see it the other way)," lamented Velasco, who was given a stern warning for his bitter protest against the scoring of Galido's fight.

Bantamweight Joan Tipon, lightweight Genebert Basadre and light welterweight Mark Jason Melligen take up the cudgels for the Filipinos Sunday.

Tipon takes on Turkey's Ozgar, Basadra fights Malat of Hungary and Melligen tangles with Hammed of Israel.

SPORTSWATCH

'Swing a club, build a church'

THE FIRST St. Francis Xavier Parish Golf tournament will be held tomorrow 27, at the Evercrest Golf and Country Club in Batulao, Nasugbu, Batangas. With the theme "Swing a club and build a Church," the tournament aims to raise funds for the completion of the construction of the St. Francis Xavier parish church, which was started eight years ago. Msgr. Alfredo Madlangbayan, parish priest, said scoring will be System 36, with all participants assured of a gift. For particulars, call 043-9315186.

NCA 7-Cock Derby all set today

QUALITY fights are expected when the National Cockers Association (NCA) presents another bigtime 7-cock derby beginning at 5 p.m. today at the air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum. Co-hosted by Gov. Ito Ynares, Rep. Claude Bautista and Richard Bates, the event starts with the 3-cock qualifying round today followed by the championship on Thursday, April 28. Two entries shared the title in the NCA 7-Cock Derby held last April 12 and 14—Wild Wing Sundance of Rep. Ronnie Puno and Boy Jiao and Binangonan Balbina of Gov. Ynares and former Ambassador Danding Cojuangco. Meanwhile, another NCA 7-Cock Derby sizzles at the Araneta Coliseum on May 3 and 5. For inquiries, contact 9112928 and 9113101.

Big Texas cockfest slated on May 3

DUE TO the big number of entries, the upcoming "One-Cock Fastest Win Super Ulutan" slated on May 3 at Texas Cockpit Arena (Sumulong Highway, Antipolo City) will start at 7 a.m. TCA manager, TJ Marquez said that based on reservations as of yesterday, the total number of entries will easily exceed 300. At stake is a guaranteed prize of P630,000 while entry fee is only P2,200. The top three major prizes are P135,000 for first, P90,000 for second and P60,000 for third. The promoters, Sam Mendoza, Kags Paliza and Aba Badiola, said that the first 20 winners will get a mountain bike along with the last 10 winners. Call 0918-9251121 (Kags) or 0921-5191962 (Aba). Paliza and Badiola will host the "Daytime 4-Cock Derby" on May 26 and 28 at Sta. Ana Cockpit, with a guaranteed prize of P700,000.

Cebuano bets take spotlight

FOCUS will be on the local bets as Cebu hosts the JVC Regional Badminton Championships beginning today at the Metro Sports Badminton Club courts in Lahug, Cebu City.

Led by Batang Pinoy champions Moonyen Armecin and Clint Armamento and the top finishers in the recent PRISAA competitions, the four-day event ending Friday drew close to 200 participants, ensuring a tight battle for top honors in various categories plus berths in the JVC Open Championships.

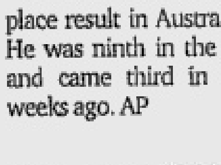
Hideyuki Takato, president JVC (PHILS), Inc., Kazue Salud, general manager, JVC (PHILS), Inc., Cebu City Vice Mayor Mike Rama, Cebu Sports Commission chair Jonathan Guardo and Cebu Visitors and Convention Bureau chair Patrick Gregorio will hit the ceremonial serve at 10 a.m. Joining Armecin in the women's 16-under class are Lourdes Aredeon and Yedah Fornolles while Armamento will have his hands full in the men's side against the likes of James Rizon, Nino Palacio, John Densing and Nino Anthony Go.

Contenders in the elite division are Hazel Peroy, Kara Montejo, Joebelyn Espigol and Geryl Aliwati, second placer in the 2005 PRISAA Games, in the ladies event while PRISAA titlist Patrick Duarte, Ronald Daymiel Ralph Mendez, Spyro Mijares, Solito Flores and Eliezer Yac and Cagayan bets Julius Magallanes and Vergello Natan head the men's roster.

KEGFEST OPENS: The Boysen-Tenpin Bowlers' Association of Makati Classic Bowling Tournament opened recently in Powerbowl, Rockwell Center, Makati. Danny Santos of Boysen Phils., Jeffrey Cham and four-time world champion Bong Coo led the ceremonial roll.

Pocketing the lessons

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

THE POCKET tournament of the PBA that ended yesterday was the stuff that makes the league's reason for being. It was a relevant endeavor because it was a move towards the right direction. It gave our Philippine Team training for overseas battles something to chew on. As in boxing, it was an exercise that translated into a sparring session geared to redound to the benefit of Chot Reyes' boys.

The visitors may be weak, but that is no reason to dismiss outright the event as a laughing matter. Every scrimmage against teams from overseas gives us pointers too valuable to undermine, no matter the quality of our foes.

Yes, the Italian team was laughable enough. But reason over emotion prevailed in the end, though, when the Italians themselves, seeing the foolishness of their continued stay in the country after absorbing a drubbing from a non-PBA team in a tune-up match, elected to call it quits. That averted a monumental disaster.

There was much lesson to be learned there, not only on the part of the PBA but also on the Italian side.

Claiming it had left its top two players behind in Italy, the team officials took it upon themselves to swallow their pride rather than have it shredded into smithereens by aborting their stint in the PBA pocket event. In surrender, there is also victory somewhere as you foiled the opponent's aim of annihilating you.

If defeat it can be called, it's but a temporary setback.

Let's have more of this kind of tournament. For one, it constantly exposes our team to different brands of strategy by the opposition, which should educate us on how they do it in their own backyard. For another, it's not the win, but the "feel the world" effect absorbed by our own through battles they engage in against totally new opponents.

When the idea is good, by all means let's go for it. One debacle is not enough to kill a spectacle.

* * *

I SALUTE once more the likes of Commodore Danny Pizarro, the president of the Riviera Golf Club in Silang, Cavite, and Joe Dagdagan, the grounds chief of Riviera Golf Club, for their splendid partnership in putting their golf course in tip-top shape despite the harsh heat of summer.

Participants in the highly smashing 7th Riviera Golf Invitational were profuse in their praise of the course, which yielded not even a single patch of brown in any part of either the fairways or greens.

Buddy Encarnado and Henry Arabelo were also in their usual brilliant selves in packaging the event, making sure there was not a single kink, minor or otherwise, to mar the four-day tournament.

It was but fitting therefore that RGC Chair Junie Jayme (the birthday kid himself that day) paid tribute to the wonderful deeds of these guys—and many more—calling them "the unsung heroes of the tournament" during his warmly applauded speech at the Awards Night ably emceed by Lea Navarro and Eric Gozo.

I did not win the plane ticket raffled off by Asiana Airlines but I couldn't care less. I won it last year, but alas, instead of joy succeeding it, sadness would soon engulf me. I was not able to use it after Asiana officials had denied my request to extend its validity beyond its prescribed validity of three months. I hope the winner doesn't suffer the same sad fate should he decide to also ask for an extension.

Imagine the heckling I had to endure (up to now, mind you) from friends each time the issue would come up.

Oh, well, Jimmy Bautista, the humble PAL president who was at the Awards Night on Sunday, would have shaken his head in disbelief had he known about my woeful experience. We had a good-natured conversation lining up for dinner, and I did not want him to suffer from indigestion trying to unlock the key if I had told him about the tale of the ticket that got away.

But anyway, past is past. You win some You lose some. Life has got to move on. See you next year in the 8th Riviera Invitational.

Raffle or no raffle.

* * *

FASTBREAK. Rob and Rose Dix had been lovely hosts to their dear friends that included Immigration Commissioner Al Fernandez and San Miguel Corporation's Don Ramon Santiago of Tarlac City during the weekend to celebrate the double birthday celebration of Russell (April 23) and Rob (April 24) at their charming farm in Casilagan somewhere in Pangasinan. Terribly missed was my primo, May or Alfonso "Ponsing" Soriano of Malasiqui, Pangasinan. What happened, primo? Work, work, work? Happy birthday again to Russell and my mate, Rob. Belated greetings also go to Rob's Rose.

Montaña eyes No. 6 against Nenaco-SBC

GAMES TODAY (*Pasig Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Bacchus vs Magnolia
4 p.m.—Montaña vs Nenaco

AFTER back-to-back escape acts, the Montaña Jewels expect to breeze past the winless Nenaco-San Beda squad today in the PBL Unity Cup eliminations at the Pasig Sports Center.

The unbeaten Jewels are hands-down choices to pick up a sixth straight victory in their 4 p.m. date with the cellar-dwelling Lions.

Despite the Jewels' impressive streak, coach Robert Sison said Montaña can't afford to relax.

"The elims is still a long way, anything can still happen so we have to stay focused and play as hard as we can," said Sison. "We're winning games right now but we need to play harder and better."

It's coach Koy Banal, though, who needs to demand aggressiveness from the Magnolia Ice Cream Wizards.

The defending champion Wizards have been struggling in the young tournament although they are still favored against the inexperienced Bacchus Energy Kings in today's opener at 2 p.m.

The Wizards got off to a quick start against newcomer Harbour Centre last Saturday only to fall apart in the closing minutes and take a 71-66 setback.

But the Wizards will try to improve their 2-3 win-loss record behind Arwind Santos, Dennis Miranda and Neil Rañeses.

The Jewels, meanwhile, are coming off dramatic victories, with Froilan Baguion hitting two game-winning baskets in a row against Welcoat Paints (88-86 in overtime) and Toyota Otis-Letran (74-72).

Expectedly, though, it's still the seasoned duo of Alex Compton and last conference's Most Valuable Player Jon Dan Salvador who will lead the Jewels' offense.

But Nenaco-San Beda will try to end their five-game losing streak with shooter Noy Javier, a former member of the RP Team-Cebuana Lhuillier, Jerome Paterno and Yousif Aljamal at the helm.

The Lions went down to Granny Goose, 69-57, in their last outing while the skidding Energy Kings will also try to bounce back from their 89-79 setback against Welcoat behind Romar Menor, Nani Epondulan and Paolo Hubalde. *Jasmine W. Payo*

NEW RP QUARTERS Philippine Sports Commission officer-in-charge Butch Ramirez, Philsoc head Roberto Pagdanganan, and POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco inspect the new home of the RP athletes at the PhilSports in Pasig yesterday

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

RP Pool B hands Iran second loss

Special board meeting today

By June Navarro

SAN MIG Cofee-RP Team B abandoned its penchant for individual plays to squeeze out a 90-75 win over the Iranian national team in the PBA RP Invitational Challenge last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

RP head coach Chot Reyes and his wards almost fell prey to the Iranians' hustle as the Nationals opted for flashy moves rather than rotating the ball at break-neck pace to disrupt the opponent's smothering defense.

The result was a tooth-and-nail battle for most part of the first two quarters before the Nationals gave up their appetite for dribbling and penetrating to finally break away at the half, 49-35.

Brandon Cablay, Tony Dela Cruz and Eric Menk pooled their resources, challenging the stifling stand of the Iranians that enabled the Nationals to mount a 13-4 assault minutes before the halftime break.

Jimmy Alapag, James Yap and Anthony Washington kept the pace through the final two quarters as the Nationals surged ahead, 80-59, midway in the fourth to hand the Iranians their second straight defeat.

Mark Caguioa's three-pointer gave San Mig Cofee-RP Team B its first taste of the lead, 18-15, but the Iranians learned their lesson against the other national pool which manhandled them, 79-60, Sunday night.

Meanwhile, the PBA board convenes in a special meeting today to decide, among other things, if its millionaire stars are needed to bail out the ineffective national team program of the Basketball Association of the Philippines—even for a small tournament like the SEABA (Southeast Asian Basketball Association).

And should help come, both the PBA and the BAP will be on a collision course as to what colors the RP team will wear in the event.

Cebuana Lhuillier has been bankrolling the BAP program for the last three years, and the participation of the PBA in the SEABA will bring about complications in advertising.

With a report from Musong Castillo

The Scores:

SAN MIG COFEE RP-B 90—Caguioa 13, Alapag 13, Menk 11, Dela Cruz 9, Belasco 8, Washinton 8, Villanueva 7, Cablay 7, Yap 6, Reavis 4, Pena 3.

IRAN 75—Kabir 15, Shahsavand 14, Tabeshia 14, Amini 10, Bordbar 8, Doraghi 7, Sahakian 4, Davodichgani 3, Monavari 0, Khabazan 0.

Quarters: 25-24, 49-35, 70-54, 90-75.

Ball no longer…

From page A23

ently from the BAP, Eala said that "bringing together the sport's major stakeholders is a big thing. Before, there was an issue of trust and sincerity. Right now, you know everybody's sincere in really improving basketball in the country.

"I just hope this committee can bring reforms to the basketball hierarchy," he added.

The verdict on the BAP's effectiveness came on a day when its officials started to flex its muscles in the committee. During the first meeting, secretary general Graham Lim was reduced to nodding in agreement to the reforms being plotted in the basketball landscape.

Yesterday, BAP vice president Christian Tan put forward two motions of his own: The retention of the Cebuana Lhuillier squad reinforced by PBA and PBL players for the Seaba tournament and the return to the old days when the BAP green-lighted players who wanted to turn professional-a rule that, he said, would make top amateurs more readily available for national commitment.

The committee fine-tuned the first request, saying the Cebuana Lhuillier players would simply be absorbed into the national pool already put in place by the PBA, along with players from the PBL.

Moying Martelino, also a member of the committee, said the advent of open basketball rendered Tan's second motion useless.

"That law was necessary before because professionals were not allowed to represent their country in international meets," Martelino explained.

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J.E.D.I. ACADEMY
L86
REVENGE OF THE SITH
L104
VADER
L109
L122
CLONE TROOPER
TC107
CLONE TROOPER
TC108
TC109
CLONE TROOPER
TC110
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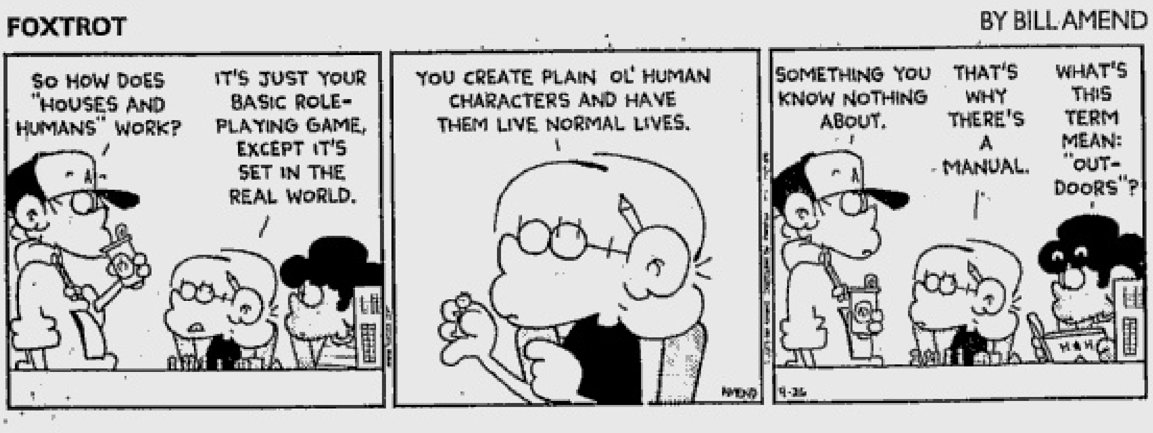
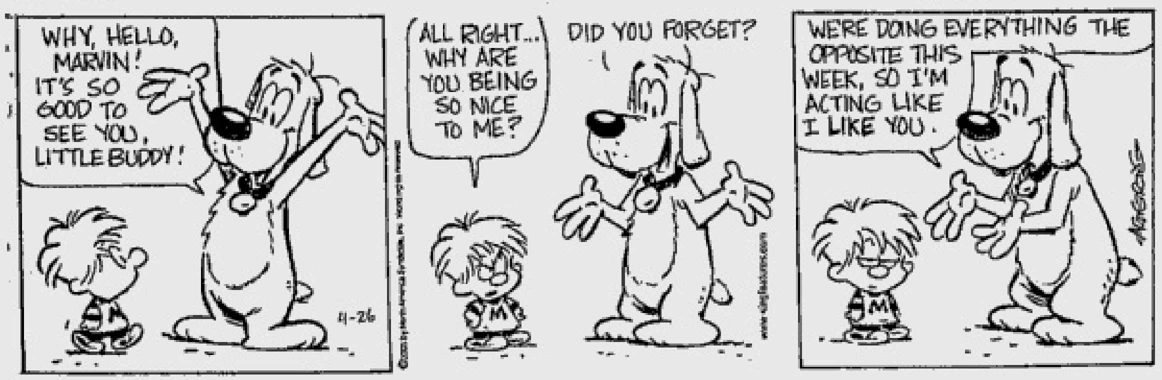
Promo ends June 30, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit # 1265, Series of 2005.

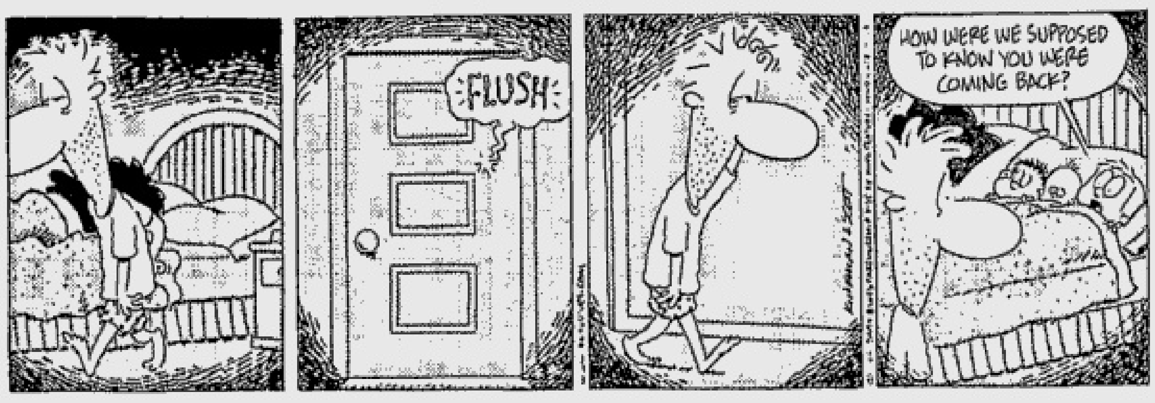
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


SO HOW DOES "HOUSES AND HUMANS" WORK?
IT'S JUST YOUR BASIC ROLE-PLAYING GAME, EXCEPT IT'S SET IN THE REAL WORLD.
YOU CREATE PLAIN OL' HUMAN CHARACTERS AND HAVE THEM LIVE NORMAL LIVES.
SOMETHING YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT.
THAT'S WHY THERE'S A MANUAL.
WHAT'S THIS TERM MEAN: "OUT-DOORS"?
H&H
4-26

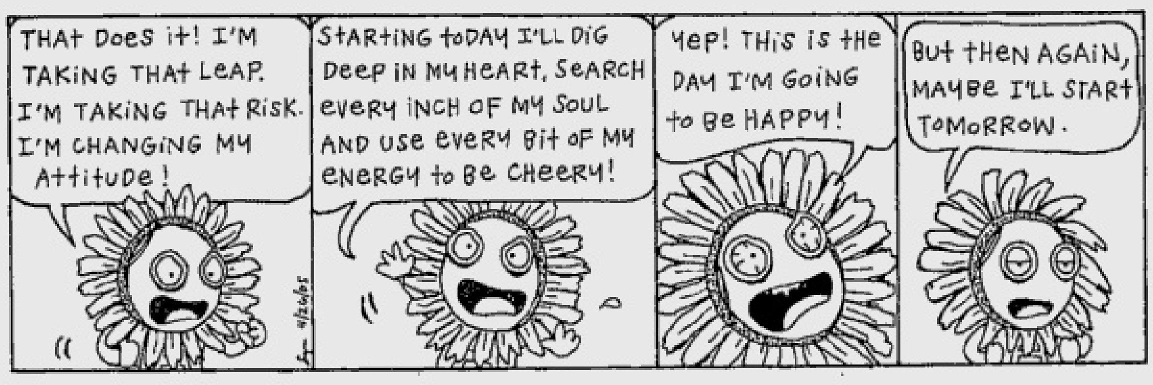
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WHY, HELLO, MARVIN! IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU, LITTLE BUDDY!
4-26
ALL RIGHT... WHY ARE YOU BEING SO NICE TO ME?
DID YOU FORGET?
WE'RE DOING EVERYTHING THE OPPOSITE THIS WEEK, SO I'M ACTING LIKE I LIKE YOU.

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


FLUSH
HOW WERE WE SUPPOSED TO KNOW YOU WERE COMING BACK?

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


THAT DOES IT! I'M TAKING THAT LEAP. I'M TAKING THAT RISK. I'M CHANGING MY ATTITUDE!
STARTING TODAY I'LL DIG DEEP IN MY HEART, SEARCH EVERY INCH OF MY SOUL AND USE EVERY BIT OF MY ENERGY TO BE CHEERY!
YEP! THIS IS THE DAY I'M GOING TO BE HAPPY!
BUT THEN AGAIN, MAYBE I'LL START TOMORROW.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very clever at knowing how to get things done. You know how to create something, and you know how to maintain it. You're organized, and you can implement your ideas. You don't abandon what you create; you tend it with care. This year you'll face important choices. Different doorways lead to different futures. Choose wisely. **Birthdate of:** Jet Li, martial artist/actor; Carol Burnett, comedian/actress; Gracie Allen, comedian.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're encouraged about plans for travel or plans connected with education and school. Publishing matters are exciting as well. You feel hopeful about your future.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): A friend might surprise you with something quite delightful today. You could get a gift from someone. Or perhaps someone does you a favor. Great!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're definitely in touch with your creative side today. This might be why you seem to surprise your boss, a parent or any other authority figure in your life. (Who knew?)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Surprising news from afar might pleasantly impact your home and family today. Something definitely catches you off-guard and gives you a warm feeling in your tummy.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're romantically restless today. You want to have more fun and adventure in your life. Don't stir up trouble with an existing relationship just because you're bored. (Not wise.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your partner or a relative will have a surprise for you today. (Or vice versa.) No doubt it relates to money and possessions. This could be an unexpected purchase that pleases you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're in high spirits today! Because of this, interruptions to your daily work schedule are likely. You're tempted to take off and do something different. (You feel rebellious.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is an excellent day for business, commerce and all kinds of financial activity. However, be careful with financial speculation, because this could go either way.

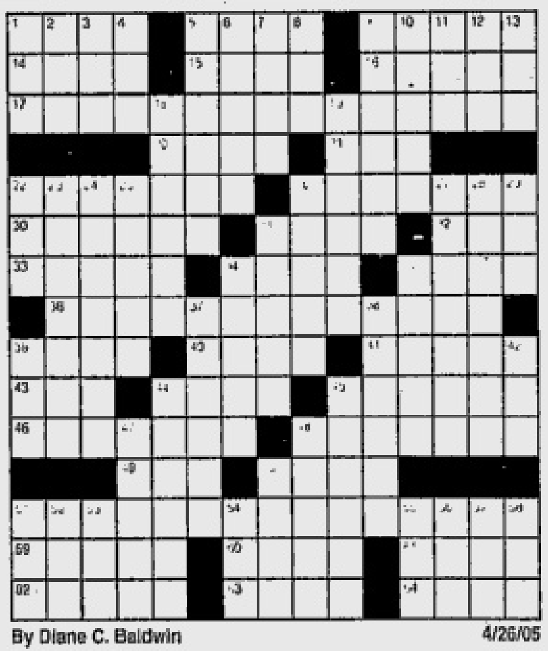
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a lovely day to schmooze with friends and groups. You have an unusual story about home or family with which you can entertain everyone.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): People behind the scenes are supportive of you today. You feel secure. Nevertheless, it's a mildly accident-prone day. Take extra precautions when driving and walking.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): A friend or someone of a different background from yours is quite intriguing! You're fascinated by something new to learn. This could make you buy something spontaneously, right on the spot.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You don't want to be told what to do today. You feel confident in going your own way. (Plus you know that others are supporting you now.) This knowledge makes you bold and confident.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD
4/26/05

ACROSS
1 Hodgepodge
5 Highland hillside
9 Congregate thickly
14 Beer formation
15 Superman's girl
16 Apple drink
17 Behave
20 Individuals
21 Keg quaff
22 Archipelago members
26 Steering mechanisms
30 Gives the what for
31 Chest muscles, briefly
32 Comic Costello
33 Madame Curie
34 Suitable moment
35 Galactic time period
36 Master the basics
39 Ailments
40 Numbered composition
41 Addle-brained
43 Name for an unknown
44 Park and Lex.
45 Evening event
46 Gave a pitch
48 Neck bands
49 Moving truck
50 __ "Fatha" Hines
51 Attend to details
59 Smart guy?
60 Starter chips
61 On the crest of
62 Greek triangle
63 Bondsman's outlay
64 Talking bird

DOWN
1 Unit of resistance
2 Wahine's adornment
3 Writer McEwan
4 Fluky
5 Fair-haired boys
6 Rakes
7 Shows on the tube
8 6th sense
9 Brings almost to boiling
10 __ and dined
11 Contribute
12 Order form: abbr.
13 "__ Dalloway"
18 Over thar
19 Shallow dish
22 Ending for a belief
23 Fan-shaped mollusk
24 Siren of legend
25 Pseudonym
26 Story-telling uncle
27 Entertainer Carmen
28 Chanticleer
29 Nearest star
31 Holier-than-thou
34 Tapped on a keyboard
35 Seething
37 Nine-days' devotion
38 Son of Zeus
39 Psyche parts
42 Willing word
44 49th state
45 Brownish horse
47 Kick out
48 Spiny flora
50 Author Ferber
51 June celebrant
52 Toledo bravo
53 __ Aviv-Jaffa
54 Put a collar on
55 Sleuth Spade
56 Porker's pad
57 Freight weight
58 Vichy or Ems

Monday's Puzzle Solved

T	O	L	L	■	C	A	S	A	■	S	P	R	A	T
O	P	I	E	■	A	G	E	S	■	W	E	I	G	H
G	A	N	G	P	L	A	N	K	■	E	N	N	U	I
O	L	D	G	U	A	R	D	■	B	A	D	G	E	S
■	■	■	I	B	I	S	■	H	A	R	E	M	■	■
R	E	P	E	L	S	■	H	E	Y	■	N	A	N	A
I	M	A	R	I	■	M	O	N	O	■	T	S	A	R
L	A	C	■	C	R	E	W	C	U	T	■	T	I	C
L	I	K	E	■	I	S	L	E	■	A	L	E	V	E
S	L	A	M	■	O	S	S	■	S	C	A	R	E	D
■	■	N	A	T	T	Y	■	S	A	K	S	■	■	■
T	W	I	N	E	S	■	T	E	L	L	T	A	L	E
R	E	M	A	P	■	J	I	T	T	E	R	B	U	G
I	R	A	T	E	■	E	D	I	E	■	O	L	G	A
M	E	L	E	E	■	T	E	N	D	■	W	E	E	D

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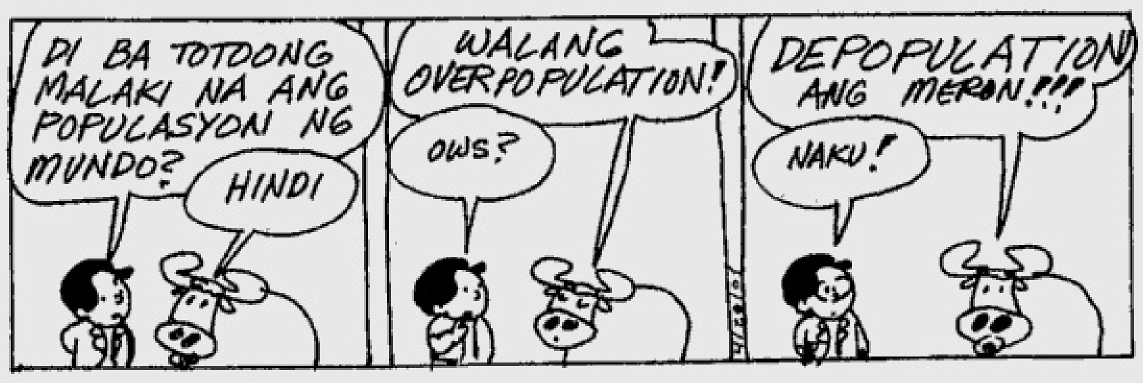
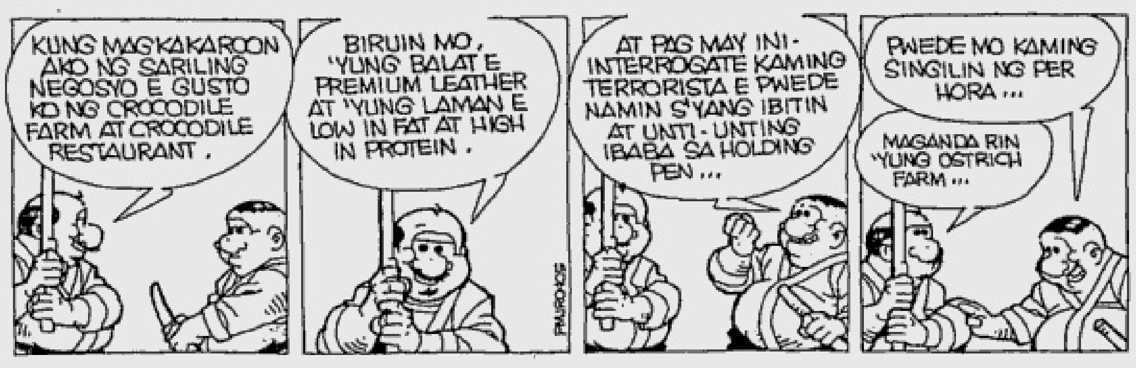
4/25/05

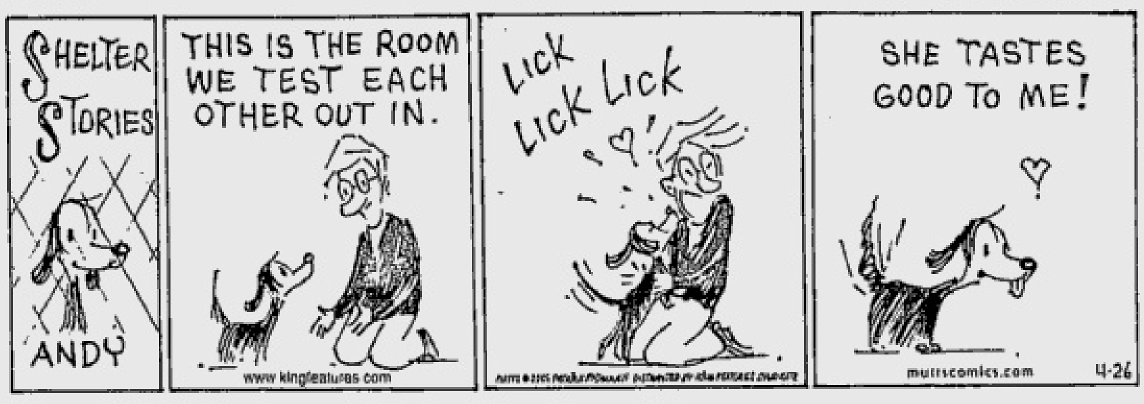
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


DI BA TOTOONG MALAKI NA ANG POPULASYON NG MUNDO?
HINDI
OWS?
WALANG OVERPOPULATION!
NAKU!
DEPOPULATION ANG MERON!!!

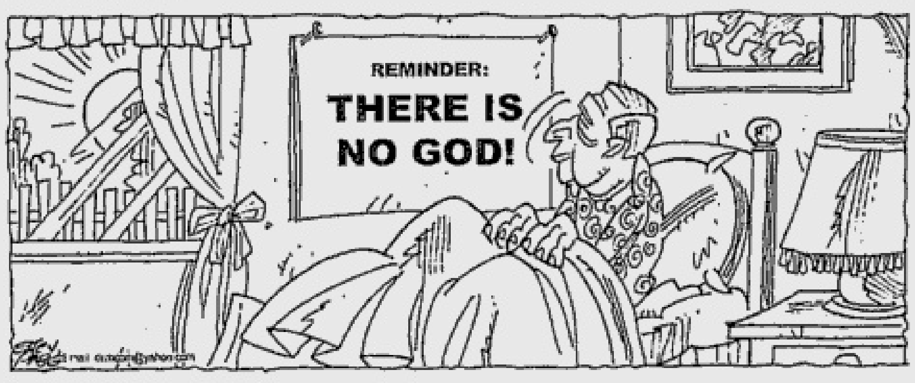
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


KUNG MAG'KAKAROON AKO NG SARILING NEGOSYO E GUSTO KO NG CROCODILE FARM AT CROCODILE RESTAURANT.
BIRUIN MO, 'YUNG BALAT E PREMIUM LEATHER AT 'YUNG LAMAN E LOW IN FAT AT HIGH IN PROTEIN.
AT PAG MAY INI-INTERROGATE KAMING TERRORISTA E PWEDE NAMIN S'YANG IBITIN AT UNTI-UNTING IBABA SA HOLDING PEN...
PWEDE MO KAMING SINGILIN NG PER HORA...
MAGANDA RIN 'YUNG OSTRICH FARM...

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

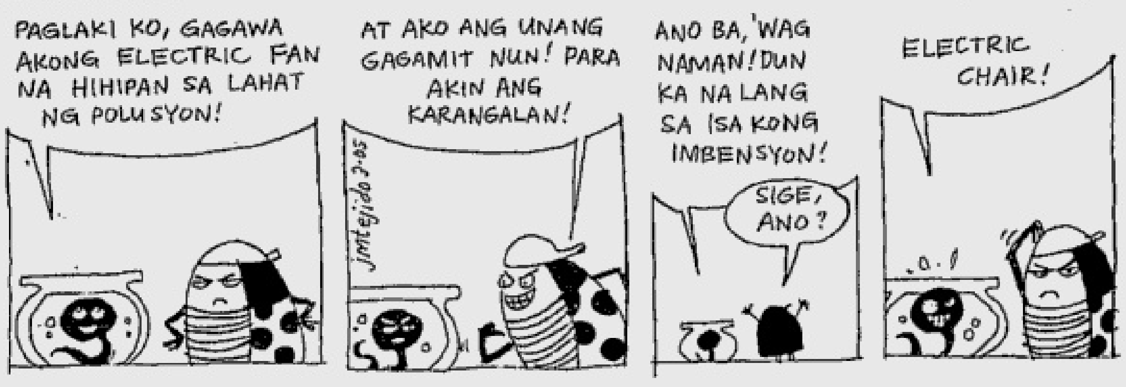

SHELTER STORIES
ANDY
THIS IS THE ROOM WE TEST EACH OTHER OUT IN.
www.kingfeatures.com
LICK LICK LICK
SHE TASTES GOOD TO ME!
muttscomics.com
4-26

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

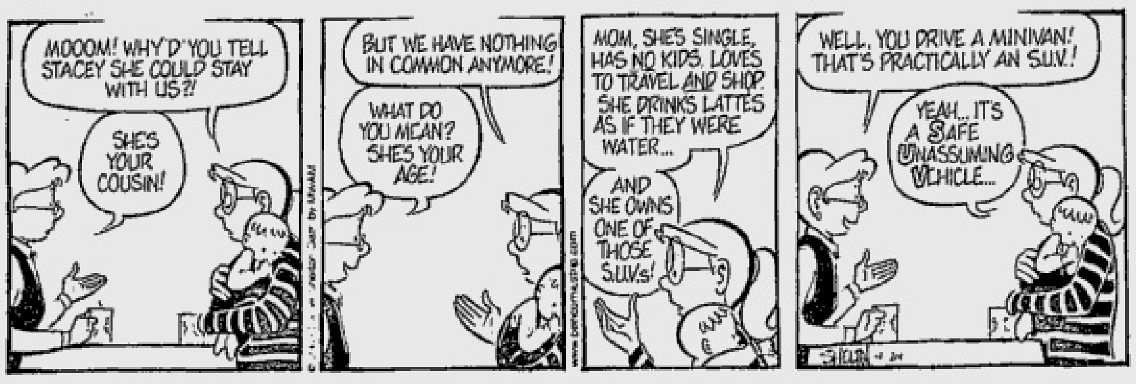

REMINDER:
THERE IS NO GOD!

ATHEIST NA MAY ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

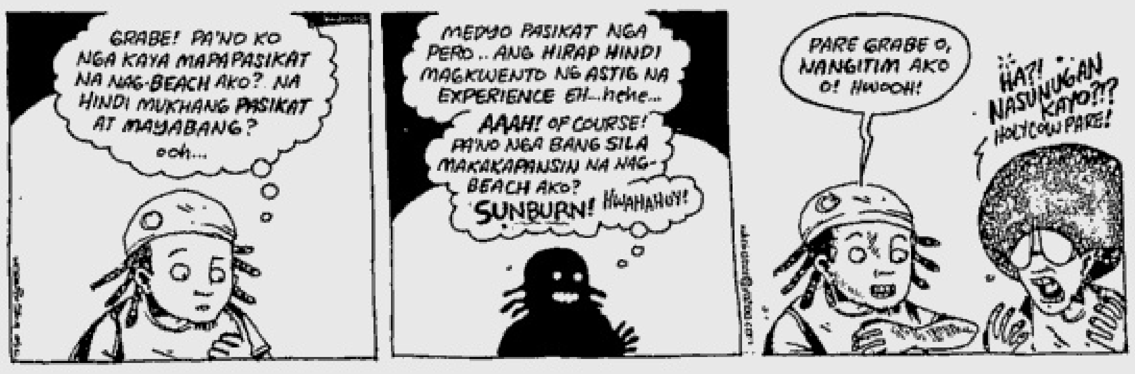
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAGLAKI KO, GAGAWA AKONG ELECTRIC FAN NA HIHIPAN SA LAHAT NG POLUSYON!
AT AKO ANG UNANG GAGAMIT NUN! PARA AKIN ANG KARANGALAN!
jmtejido 2-05
ANO BA, 'WAG NAMAN! DUN KA NA LANG SA ISA KONG IMBENSYON!
SIGE, ANO?
ELECTRIC CHAIR!

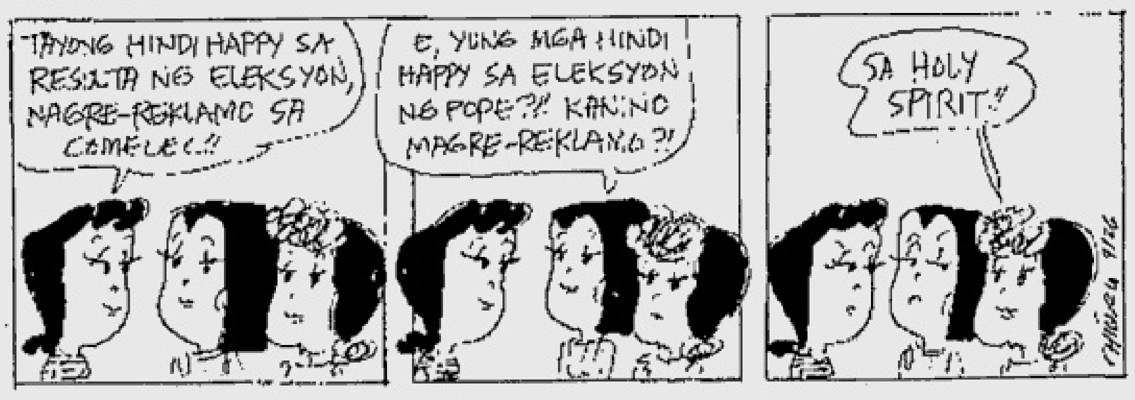
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


MOOOM! WHY'D YOU TELL STACEY SHE COULD STAY WITH US?!
SHE'S YOUR COUSIN!
BUT WE HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON ANYMORE!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? SHE'S YOUR AGE!
MOM, SHE'S SINGLE, HAS NO KIDS, LOVES TO TRAVEL AND SHOP. SHE DRINKS LATTES AS IF THEY WERE WATER...
AND SHE OWNS ONE OF THOSE S.U.V.s!
WELL, YOU DRIVE A MINIVAN! THAT'S PRACTICALLY AN S.U.V.!
YEAH... IT'S A SAFE UNASSUMING VEHICLE...

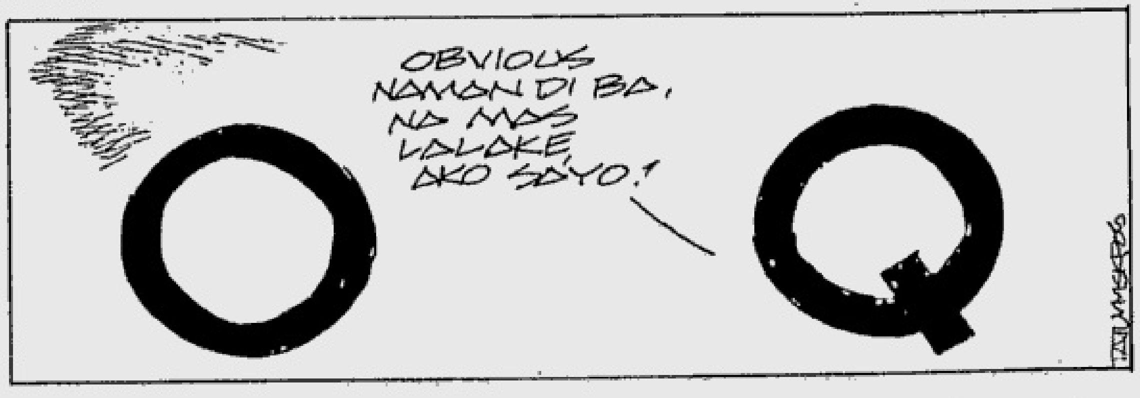
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


GRABE! PA'NO KO NGA KAYA MAPAPASIKAT NA NAG-BEACH AKO? NA HINDI MUKHANG PASIKAT AT MAYABANG? ooh...
MEDYO PASIKAT NGA PERO.. ANG HIRAP HINDI MAGKWENTO NG ASTIG NA EXPERIENCE EH...hehe...
AAAH! OF COURSE! PA'NO NGA BANG SILA MAKAKAPANSIN NA NAG-BEACH AKO? SUNBURN! HWAHAHUY!
PARE GRABE O, NANGITIM AKO O! HWOOH!
HA?! NASUNUGAN KAYO?!? HOLYCOW PARE!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


TAYONG HINDI HAPPY SA RESULTA NG ELEKSYON, NAGRE-REKLAMO SA COMELEC..!!
E, YUNG MGA HINDI HAPPY SA ELEKSYON NG POPE?!! KANINO MAGRE-REKLAMO?!
SA HOLY SPIRIT!!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


OBVIOUS NAMAN DI BA, NA MAS LALAKE AKO SAYO!

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
ENTERTAINMENT
Editor Emmie G. Velarde
Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Pami seeks Unesco help vs scandal TV

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Contributor

Talent managers are set to meet today with local officials of the int'l agency

THE PROFESSIONAL Artist Managers Inc. (Pami) is seeking the help of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) against scandal-oriented television talk shows.

In a phone interview with INQUIRER Entertainment, Pami member Norma Japitana, a Unesco commissioner for communications, said the UN agency "has expressed grave concern over the long-term effects of too much lurid gossip on the younger generation."

Japitana has worked with the agency for three years now. Among her fellow commissioners are broadcasters Cheche Lazaro and Karen Davila.

As artist manager, among her talents are award-winning actor and director Cesar Montano.

According to its official web site, the Unesco National Commission of the Philippines pursues the mother organization's goals of "human and sustainable development and building a culture of peace through its fields of competence: education, science and technology, social and human sciences, culture and communications."

Same wavelength

Japitana recalled when Pami's crusade was first brought up in a meeting of Unesco Philippines: "We all got excited. Unesco International is always on the lookout for advocacies in line with Third World development goals. Because we were on the same wavelength, it was immediately agreed that key Pami members should hold a dialogue with Unesco people."

The meeting is scheduled for today, with Pami president June Torrejon-Rufino, chair Ethel Ramos, and members Shirley Kuan-Saldias, Ed Instrella and Japitana in attendance.

Count in NCCA, CCP

Aside from Unesco, the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) have joined the crusade against "unethical entertainment journalism" on television.

The heads of the NCCA and the CCP—executive director Cecile Guidote-Alvarez and president Nes Jardin, respectively—have both signed a position letter drafted by award-winning filmmaker Jose Javier Reyes.

The letter was presented to advertising groups, who endorsed it to their clients, resulting in a pullout of ads from some talk shows over the weekend.

MEGA'S US TOUR
After seven years, Sharon "Megastar" Cuneta goes on another concert tour of the United States next month: at the Moran Performing Arts Theater in Jacksonville, Florida, May 8; Rosemont Theater in Chicago, May 14; Mark Etess Arena at Trump Taj Majal in Atlantic City, May 22; Reno Events Center, May 29; Starlight Theater, Pala Casino Resort and Spa in San Diego, June 5, and Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, June 11.

JOEY Ayala in Legazpi JUN NARVADEZ

Why pirates don't bother Joey Ayala

By Gil Francis G. Arevalo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—Singer Joey Ayala says his records are not pirated because few people appreciate authentic Filipino music.

Ayala, known for cultural-environmentalist music and use of traditional instruments, was here on Friday for a special concert sponsored by Tanggol-Kalikasan Bicol to boost efforts for activities that will benefit the Mayon Volcano and the *butanding*, or whale sharks.

The singer had just come back from a performance in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

"Organizations that invite me to perform know that the environment has always been my advocacy," Ayala told his audience on Friday. "I make sure that audiences feel love for nature and get a taste of authentic Filipino music, especially now that people tend to disregard pure music and the environment."

The Tanggol-Kalikasan gig was intended "to remind political leaders, local government units and Bicolano youths of the issues concerning environmental problems in the region, especially those brought about by mining activities."

Only hope

Ayala told INQUIRER Entertainment that the future of the local music industry lies in promoting traditional Filipino music.

His Pittsburgh concert was very encouraging as usual, he said, with his music very enthusiastically applauded by the foreign audience.

Ayala said the performance was just part of his visit as a fellow in a seminar for music and culture rights.

"I was very stimulated," he said, "talking and performing with people who appreciate their culture and uniqueness."

CDs of his songs that he brought were sold out, Ayala added.

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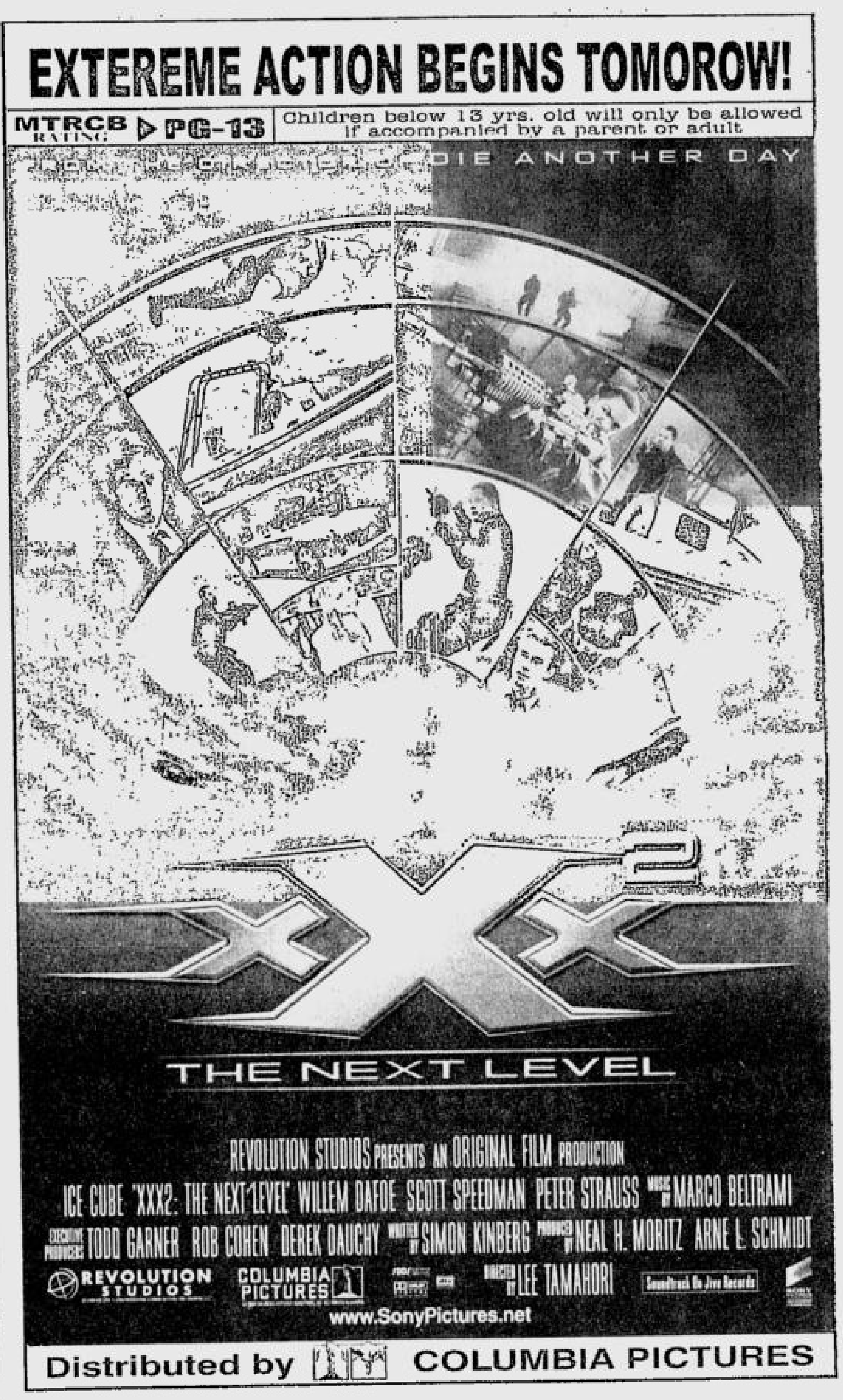
WHEN YOU DIE, ALL YOU WANT TO DO IS COME BACK.
KEIRA KNIGHTLEY
ADRIEN BRODY
THE JACKET
A HAUNTING GHOST STORY IN THE TRADITION OF "THE SIXTH SENSE"



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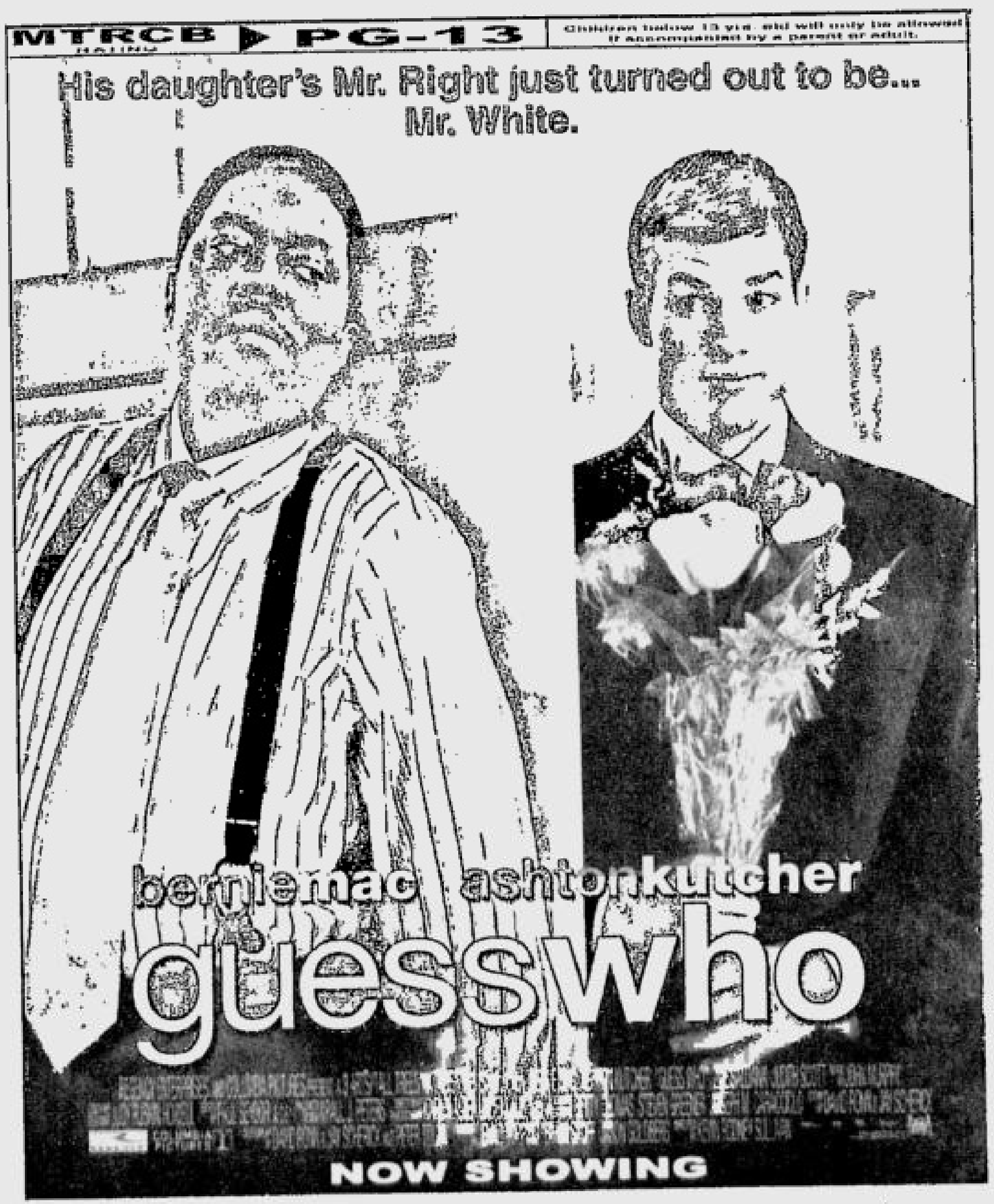
KRISTANNA LØKEN
(STAR OF TERMINATOR 3)
RING OF THE NIBELUNGS



MTRCB RATING ▸ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
His daughter's Mr. Right just turned out to be...
Mr. White.
berniemac ashtonkutcher
guesswho
NOW SHOWING

'Seinfeld' revisited

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHEN "Seinfeld" first hit the TV screen, it disarmed viewers with its deceptively insignificant plot lines about—well, practically nothing. The new sitcom was simply a sort of visual diary about the seemingly humdrum lives of four rather ordinary friends.

But viewers soon warmed up to the show's "much ado about nothing" format, because they realized that the sitcom's "nothing" was in fact "everything": "Seinfeld" was all about life in all its ordinariness, but also in all its richness.

While appearing to do little, the show managed to touch on some of the most vital aspects of living. Many of the situations were taken from the experiences of **Jerry Seinfeld** and the other members of the cast, but the sitcom's brilliance lay in its unique ability to transform the ordinary into the specially insightful—and funny.

"Seinfeld" became such a huge hit that it looked like it was going to stay on the tube for 10 more years. But Seinfeld shocked everyone by announcing that he was closing down the show while it was at the zenith of its popularity.

What happened? Show biz analysts tried to infer and impute a number of hidden motives and issues, but Seinfeld pooh-poohed all speculations and simply declared that the show had run its course—because he had told all the stories he wanted to tell, and didn't want to compromise the program's achievement by starting to repeat himself.

Besides, it had also made him a fabulously wealthy man, so the promise of more gazillions in added income didn't shake his resolve to quit while he was ahead. It's said that Seinfeld's producer offered him $200 million (!) to extend the show's life for a couple of years more, but the young comic still said no!

After "Seinfeld" ended, some people worried that its star would quickly become a has-been. Well, their fears have proven to be unfounded, as the popular show quickly acquired a second life in reissue and resale to territories all over the televiewing world.

In fact, the show has resurfaced on cable TV. We watched it recently on Star World, and the repeat viewing was like a reunion with an old friend who hadn't aged despite the passing of years.

Once more, we laughed as Seinfeld and his dysfunctional pals fretted about "inconsequential" problems that turned out to be veritable treasure troves of wit and insight. Even better, the show's humor hasn't lost its edge and warmth after the sitcom's long hiatus.

If you want to come along for the show's fun-filled ride, you can catch "Seinfeld" on reissue on the Star World and ETC cable channels.

CNN focuses on China

KNOWING full well that China's global influence has increased by leaps and bounds in the past decade, CNN is joining the Fortune Global Forum in Beijing for a week of special programming about the changes currently taking place across Asia's largest and most populous nation.

From May 15 to 22, CNN will telecast a daily coverage of the prestigious Forum, addressing the many issues expected to arise in the discussions engaged in by the opinion leaders invited to the global summit.

This will be supplemented by specially-commissioned features on diverse topics, as well as a documentary focusing on life in modern China.

This in-depth coverage is designed to result in a greater understanding of the many complex issues facing China as its influence grows in the world.

Specifically, CNN will look at the social changes taking place in China. This will include analyses of health issues, workers' rights, increasing liberalization and the trend toward free speech.

Other documentaries will look at the startling contrasts between the country's rich and poor, and life in China's different regions. And leading personalities from business and entertainment will be interviewed.

SHOW TIME

TONIGHT
King will have a concert entitled "King and I" at Rajah Sulayman Park (in front of Baywalk), Roxas Boulevard, Manila. Nina, Nyoy Volante and Aiza Marquez are guests.

Like a trip to . . .

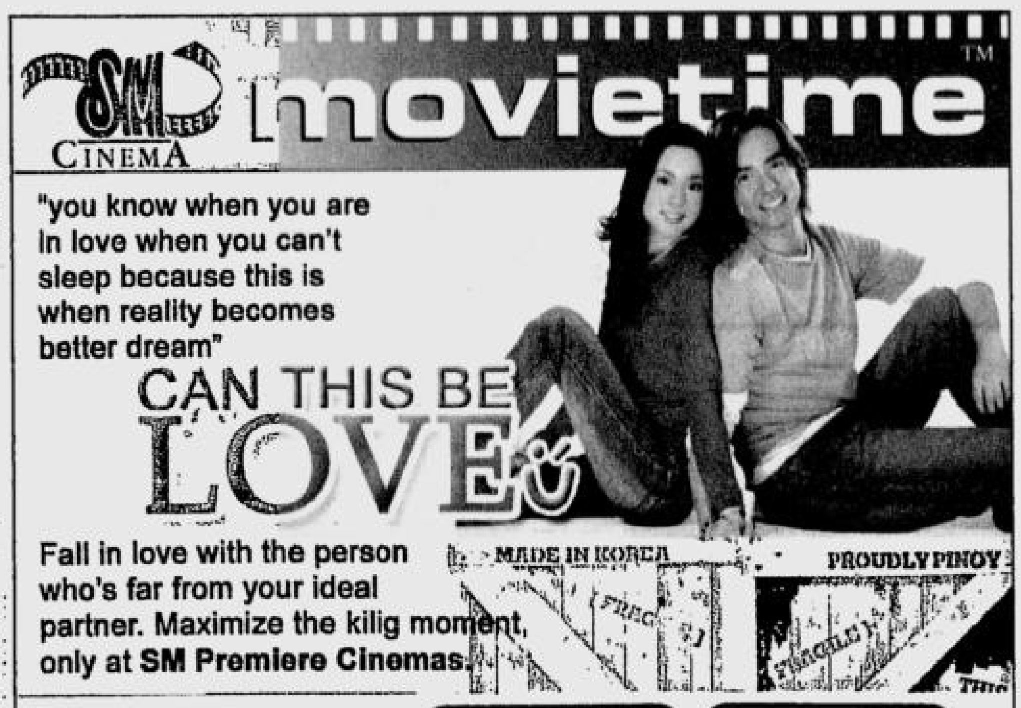
From page A2-4

Cebu some weeks ago, fans gave an overwhelming welcome, which indicated that the network has indeed arrived in the Queen City of the South.

A recent survey conducted among Cebuano viewers revealed some interesting facts. Among the findings in the Metro Cebu survey was that 69 percent of the respondents, at the time of the survey, were not aware that GMA was the most watched TV station in Mega Manila. About 41 percent of this 69 percent claimed they will be interested to watch GMA more if they knew about its leadership in Mega Manila.

The huge activities GMA lined up in Cebu on April 30 and May 1 are all geared to make Cebuanos aware that they are very much part of the Kapuso Network. If ABS-CBN has scheduled their own events in Cebu on the same dates—most likely after they found out that GMA was set to hold big events there—it's probably because the Kapamilya network feels that more and more Cebuanos are becoming Kapuso.

For feedback e-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaith-band.com



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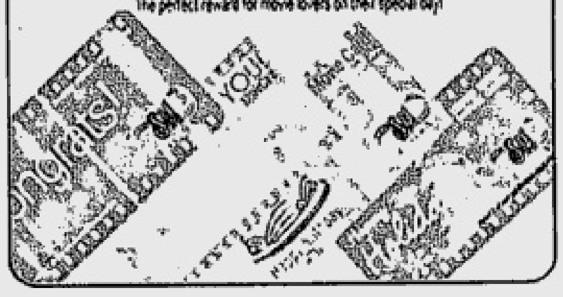

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1. THE INTERPRETER
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2. GUESS WHO
1:35 FS / 2:05 MF / 4:15 / 6:25 8:35 / 10:15 LFS / 10:45 LMF / 12:25 END
☎ 833-9978

sm megamall cinema 1
FINDING NEVERLAND
12:05 FS / 12:40 MF / 2:55 / 5:10 7:25 / 9:05 LFS / 9:40 LMF / 11:20 END
☎ 833-1901

sm cebu cinema
CINEMA 1: HIDE AND SEEK
11:30 MF / 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 9:15 LFS / 9:30 LMF / 11:15 END
CINEMA 3: THE PACIFIER
11:30 MF / 12:45 / 2:30 / 4:15 / 6:00 7:45 / 9:20 LFS / 9:30 LMF / 11:05 END
☎ (032) 231-3876

METRO MANILA

sm megamall
1 FINDING NEVERLAND
2 SAHARA
3 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
4 THE JACKET
5 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
6 SAMARA: RING 2
7 RESERVED
8 RESERVED
9 RESERVED
10 THE INTERPRETER
11 GUESS WHO
12 THE WEDDING DATE

sm city fairview
1 GUESS WHO
2 ONG BAK: THE THAI WARRIOR
3 THE WEDDING DATE
4 THE INTERPRETER
5 THE JACKET
6 SAHARA
7 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
8 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
9 SAMARA: RING 2
10 FINDING NEVERLAND
11 THE PACIFIER
12 OK KA PARE KO

sm city north edsa
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 SAHARA
4 THE WEDDING DATE
5 THE INTERPRETER
6 THE JACKET
7 GUESS WHO
8 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS

sm city manila
1 GUESS WHO
2 THE INTERPRETER
3 FINDING NEVERLAND
4 SAHARA
5 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
6 THE WEDDING DATE
7 OK KA PARE KO
8 SAMARA: RING 2
9 RING OF THE NIBELUNG
10 THE PACIFIER
11 ONG BAK: THE THAI WARRIOR
12 THE JACKET

sm city sta. mesa
1 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
2 GUESS WHO
3 THE INTERPRETER
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED
6 OK KA, PARE
7 SAMARA: RING 2
8 SAHARA
9 THE WEDDING DATE
10 THE JACKET

sm city southmall
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
4 THE INTERPRETER
5 FINDING NEVERLAND
6 THE WEDDING DATE
7 THE JACKET
8 SAMARA: RING 2
9 SAHARA
10 GUESS WHO

sm city bicutan
1 SAHARA
2 THE WEDDING DATE
3 GUESS WHO
4 SAMARA: RING 2

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 GUESS WHO
2 SAMARA: RING 2
3 SAHARA
4 THE WEDDING DATE

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 THE WEDDING DATE
3 BE COOL
4 ONG BAK: THE THAI WARRIOR
5 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
6 THE PACIFIER

sm city baguio
1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 CURSED
3 THE PACIFIER
4 CLOSER

sm city batangas
1 BE COOL
2 ALONE IN THE DARK
3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
4 SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD

sm city dasmariñas
1 SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 SAMARA: RING 2
4 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

sm city marilao
1 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 THE WEDDING DATE
4 SAMARA: RING 2

sm city bacoor
1 THE WEDDING DATE
2 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
3 ONG BAK: THE THAI WARRIOR
4 SAMARA: RING 2
5 SAHARA
6 GUESS WHO
7 THE PACIFIER
8 OK KA PARE KO

sm city lucena
1 CURSED
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 CLOSER
4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 HIDE AND SEEK
2 RESERVED
3 THE PACIFIER
4 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
5 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
6 SAMARA: RING 2
7 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
8 SAHARA

sm city iloilo
1 SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
2 RESERVED
3 BE COOL
4 THE PACIFIER
5 BOOGEYMAN
6 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
7 RESERVED
8 SAMARA: RING 2

sm city davao
1 THE PACIFIER
2 SAHARA
3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
4 HOSTAGE
5 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
6 HIDE AND SEEK

sm city cagayan de oro
1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 THE PACIFIER
3 BE COOL
4 SAMARA: RING 2

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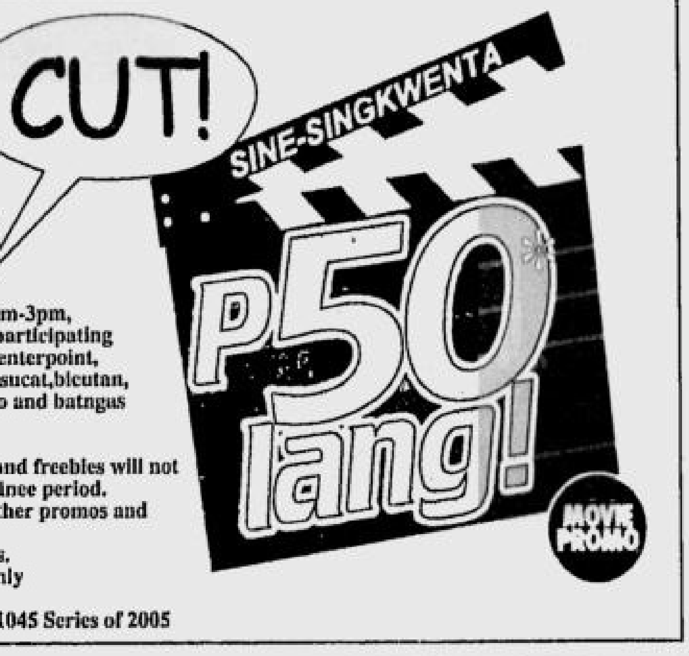

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1 WEDDING DATE
11:10, 1:30, 3:50
6:10, 8:30, 10:50
PG-13

2 THE INTERPRETER
12:05, 2:55, 5:45
8:35, 11:10
PG-13

3 GUESS WHO?
12:35, 3:10, 5:45
8:20, 10:50
PG-13

4 THE JACKET
1:15, 3:45
6:15, 8:45, 11:10

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1
2
3 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
PG13
12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:20

star group of cinemas movie guide IN DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND

starmall EDSA-SHAW
Tel. No. 726.61.50
3 Paraiso
4 Legendary Street Fighter
5 Sahara
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1 The Jacket
2 Paraiso
3 Under Renovation
4 Under Renovation
5 Ring of Nibelungs
6 Sahara

starmall LAS PIÑAS
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2 Rental Reservation
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1 THE INTERPRETER
MTRCB: PG-13
10:50, 1:40, 4:30, 7:20, 10:10

2 GUESS WHO
MTRCB PG-13
11 30, 2 05, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50

3 WEDDING DATE
MTRCB PG-13
12 30, 2 50, 5 10, 7 30, 9:50

4 SPONGEBOB (GP)
1:20, 3:20, 5:20
SAHARA (PG-13)
7:20, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
MTRCB PG-13 12 40, 3 30, 6 20, 9 10
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GALLERIA

632-9115/16

1 SAHARA • THX
1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
2 GUESS WHO?
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 THE INTERPRETER
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00
4 THE JACKET
11:15 1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00
5 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
10:40 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
6 THE WEDDING DATE
11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
7 PARAISO
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
8 BOSO
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
9 SAMARA RING 2
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
10 THE PACIFIER
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

ERMITA

536-7809 to 12

1 THE INTERPRETER
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
2 SAHARA
11:10 1:50 4:30 7:10 9:50
3 GUESS WHO?
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
4 THE WEDDING DATE
10:20 12:15 2:10 4:05 6:00 7:55 10:00
5 THE JACKET
10:40 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
6 BOSO
10:40 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:20 9:40
7 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
11:10 1:50 4:25 7:00 9:40

METRO EAST

682-8193 • 682-8199

1 PARAISO
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 SAHARA
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00
3 THE WEDDING DATE
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
4 SAMARA RING 2
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00
5 GUESS WHO?
11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30
6 THE JACKET
12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
7 THE INTERPRETER
11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30
8 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
10:55 1:50 4:45 7:40 10:30

NOVALICHES

935-3229/31

1 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
11:50 2:40 5:30 8:20
2 THE INTERPRETER
11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25
3 PARAISO
10:15 12:25 2:35 4:45 6:55 9:00
4 THE JACKET
11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20
5 GUESS WHO?
11:20 12:50 3:20 5:50 8:25
6 SAHARA
11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25
7 RESERVE
8 RESERVE

PIONEER

687-5378

1 SAHARA
2 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
3 GUESS WHO
4 THE INTERPRETER

CITISQUARE MALABON

288-2576

1 ASTERIX AND OBELIX
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 BOOGEYMAN
4 PARAISO

CAINTA

240-4661

1 THE INTERPRETER
2 GUESS WHO?
3 SAHARA
4 THE WEDDING DATE

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	4 SAMARA (RING 2)	5 THE JACKET	6 GUESS WHO	7 SAHARA
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 THE INTERPRETER 1:15, 3:50, 6:25, 9:00	2 GUESS WHO 12:40, 2:55, 5:10, 7:25, 9:40		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX GUESS WHO 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE INTERPRETER 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 FINDING NEVERLAND 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE WEDDING DATE 2:55, 5:00, 7:05, 9:10, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS 1:00, 3:35, 6:10, 8:45, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	
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Activity Center

Like a trip to our own Neverland

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I FELT like I was taking a trip to our very own Neverland when GMA 7 brought me and my colleagues to the location of their new *fantaserye*, "Encantadia."

It was not the usual presscon held in a resto. They hired tourist buses to take us to the venue. From the minute we entered the set we already got a taste of "Encantadia's" drama. Warriors were trying to shake our bus and jolt us. And when the tour proper began, we were transported to a different realm. Everyone gasped, almost in unison, "Wow! It's like Universal Studios!"

As I walked through the mystical forest, I got really caught up in the fairytale ambience. I was somehow hoping to bump into my Prince Charming there.

Instead I met the lovable creatures Awoo (a humongous dog-like creature) and the cute twosome Banak and Nakba (who look like Ewok) and the wise Imaw. For the first time in Pinoy television, electronic puppets like them will be used. All the props were made from scratch. Much attention was given to the minutest details of every gadget. Even the costumes of the Diwata daughters (**Karylle, Sunshine Dizon, Iza Calzado** and **Diana Zubiri**) were molded from fiberglass using the body cast process. So none of them must gain weight during the entire run of the *fantaserye*, lest they burst out of their body armor. Diana reportedly fainted the first time she tried on her costume.

Directed by Mark Reyes and Gil Tejada Jr., "Encantadia" will bring viewers to a world of powerful fairies, brave warriors, mythical creatures and ferocious friends starting May 2. This grand production showcases Filipino creativity and ingenuity at its best.

Leading the stellar cast are **Dawn Zulueta** as Ynang Reyna, **Dingdong Dantes** as Ybarro; **Jennylyn Mercado** as Lira/Milagros and **Mark Herras** as Anthony.

Although "Encantadia" will remind you of "Lord of the Rings," its efforts to elevate Filipino TV shows are really impressive. Some gory talk shows turn the boob tube into a wasteland. What a refreshing treat to have some wonderland via "Encantadia."

Speaking of "Encantadia," its two stars, Karylle and Dindong Dantes have finally admitted that they are a couple. Seeing their sweetness off-cam belies rumors that it's all for the promo blitz of the *fantaserye*.

Besides, I don't think that they need to resort to such gimmicks because both of them are already established stars. Karylle is out of her mom's shadow and Dingdong has proven that he can host and act as well. The lingering question, though, is this: Will the rumors about Dingdong having a kid with **Antoinette Taus** in the US now die down? Is it all just a "fantasy" ala "Encantadia"?

I enjoyed watching Extra Challenge's "Ligaw sa Davao" episodes. It was amusing to see **Gladys Reyes**, who usually portrays villain roles, turn into a softie in the reality show. She was rushed to the hospital after suffering a bad fall during the riverboat relay. The actress also cried out of frustration when she had to feed a crocodile. **Mark Anthony Fernandez** was in tiptop form. It's good to see him back in the groove after his second rehab. Looks like he really means business this time. His charming wife **Melissa** came across as the dominant type while they were both trying to hurdle the challenges, shouting at him and ordering him around. Mark took it all in stride. But perhaps a strong-willed woman like Melissa is exactly what Mark needs. **Rhea Santos** and **Ivan Mayrina** made a good pair. If Rhea were not married they would be a perfect match. I can hardly wait to watch "EC's" episode that will feature my fairy godsister Dr. **Vicki Belo** and Manay **Lolit Solis**. They will exchange lives. Will the ever-poised Vicki manage to turn into a loquacious Lolita? And will Manay pull off a class act and give up her slippers for a day?

Guess list

GUESS who this comedian is! The staff of his show are appalled with the comic's arrogant ways. During taping, he complains about inane things and gets impatient. As one of the staff members put it, "Why can't he be like his co-host who is so kind and cooperative?" To think that the co-host is more popular and has been in show biz longer! When something goes wrong during the shoot, the comic blames other people. He earns big bucks, yet all he does is pass the buck!

Guess who this loveteam is! They profess their undying love on-cam but it's all for show. The young stars don't have much of a choice but to follow their home studio's rules and pretend that they've got something going. As my gay friend commented, "OA na sila sa pagka-sweet. It's no longer believable." Oh well... too much sweetness can also cause decay in a loveteam. The real girlfriend of the young actor is a sexy dancer. Yet another case of love teams being nothing more but love schemes!

TV network panics

GMA Network has lined up several activities in Cebu at the end of this month. As the leading network, it is dead set on capturing the TV ratings lead in Cebu and other key areas in the country. This apparently caused ABS-CBN to panic, and prompted executives to hastily come up with their own efforts to stop GMA on its tracks.

Based on AGB Mega Manila ratings data for the first quarter of 2005, GMA has increased its total day ratings as it posted 18.9 percent against ABS-CBN's 13.8. Thirteen GMA shows are on the list of the overall top 15 programs. GMA managed to increase its lead despite the continuing abnormal cable ratings of some ABS-CBN programs.

GMA has vowed to duplicate its success in Mega Manila TV ratings in Cebu and other key cities in the country. Thus, it started to improve transmitter and other facilities in the provinces and began to make its presence felt particularly in Cebu since late last year. When GMA launched "Dama" in

LIKE/ A2-2

SMALLVILLE SEASON 4

The Man of Steel's once and future love, Lois Lane, makes her debut in "Smallville" tonight, when Studio 23 opens the series' fourth season on Philippine TV with the episode "Crusade." Erica Durance plays Lois, who nearly runs over a naked, amnesiac Clark Kent (Tom Welling, in photo) in the middle of a Kansas cornfield.

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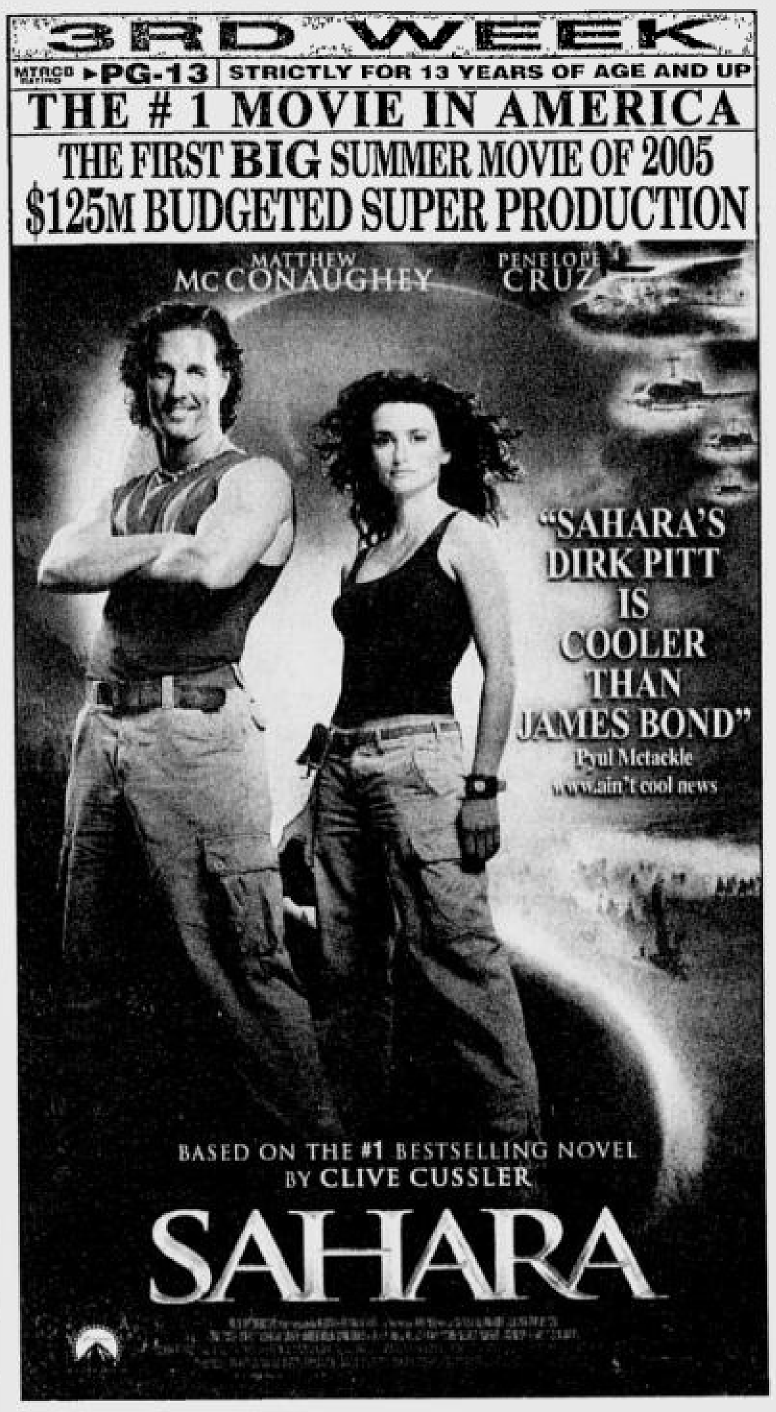

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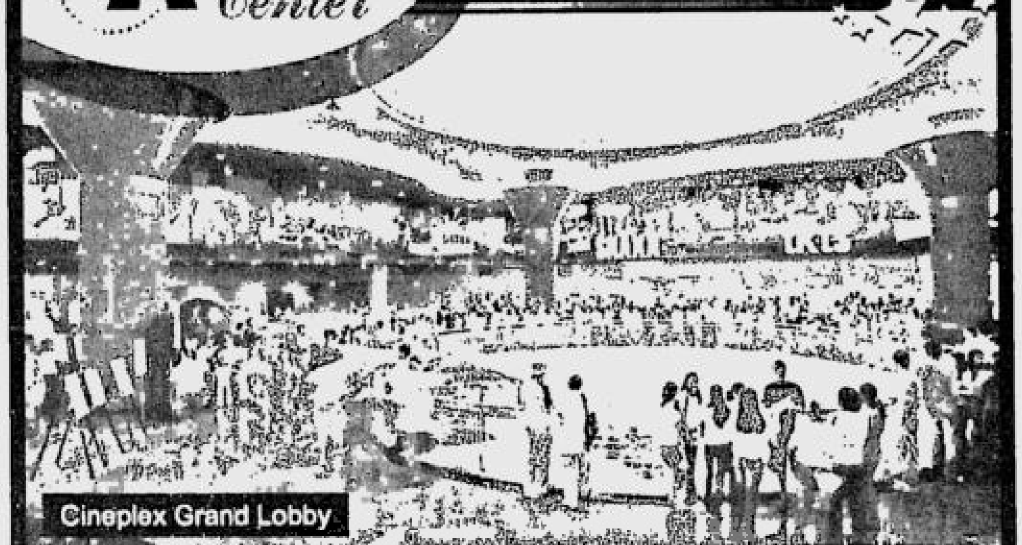

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THE JACKET
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RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
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WEDDING DATE
1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:30
SAHARA
12:30 / 3:20 / 6:10 / 9:00
SAMARA RING 2
1:55 / 4:15 / 6:35 / 8:55
FINDING NEVERLAND
12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:20
THE PACIFIER
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❶ THE INTERPRETER
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❸ GUESS WHO
11:20 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20
❹ OK KA, PARE KO
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ARANETA COLISEUM EVENTS
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE Apr. 27
4.45pm Red Bull vs. Fedex / 7.35pm Talk n' Text vs. Fedex
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE May 1
4.15 pm Alaska vs. Coke / 6 35pm Shell vs. Ginebra
MOSSIMO BIKINI SUMMIT 2005
April 30, Saturday, 8pm
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE May 4
4:45 pm Coke vs. Purefoods / 7.35pm Talk n' Text vs. Red Bull

CENTER EVENTS
ALI MALL
3-Day Mallwide Sale April 29, 30 & May 1
New Age Fitness Center Summer Workshops
3-4pm, April 21, 22, 28, 29 & 30
WILD & WACKY SUMMER
Yaw Sayaw Hip-Hop Dance Challenge 12-2pm, April 23
All Idol Singing Contest 4:30-6pm, April 23, 29, 30 & May 1
Bio-Research Pet Exhibit 3-4pm, May 1

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Management takeover of CAP pushed

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) committee overseeing the operations of troubled pre-need firm College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP) has proposed eight "urgent and drastic" measures to preserve the company's assets.

The measures have been forwarded to the Commission en banc, the policy-setting body of the SEC, for approval.

In its terminal report, the SEC oversight committee recommended that the Commission appoint a full-time management committee (mancom) for CAP, Comprehensive Annuity Plans and Pension Corp. and, if possible, all other affiliates of CAP such as CAP Health, to replace their existing boards of directors.

The committee found that CAP had gone to its affiliates with a constant stream of cash flow to provide the liquidity requirements of the company, thus expanding its recommendation to include affiliates under a possible mancom. The mancom will be tasked to manage the assets of the company, secure and preserve all records, study the viability of continuing CAP's business, and cushion the impact of CAP's financial problem on plan holders.

CAP said it could not comment on the proposals as it has yet to secure a copy of the oversight committee report.

The committee said there was also a need to look at CAP's problem as possibly affecting not only the pre-need industry but also the Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) and the insurance industries. It said CAP's problem stemmed from the fact that it had depended on its affiliates—CAP Pension, CAP Health and CAP Life—for liquidity support.

"Not only has CAP compromised its plan holders' interests but it has also prejudiced the interests of the plan holders of CAP Pension and its other affiliates. It might be more effective if the Commission can address CAP's problem by managing the financial impact caused by related party transactions," the committee said.

The committee also said the Commission should formulate remedial actions to anticipate the surge of plan holders claiming on their policies this coming school year.

MANAGEMENT/ B4

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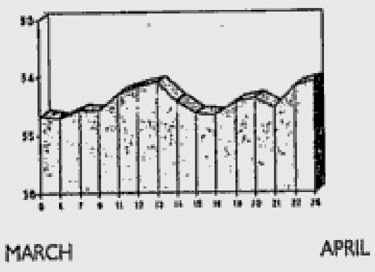


₱54.09 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 25, 2005

¥105.64 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 25, 2005

GOLD: $433.30-433.80

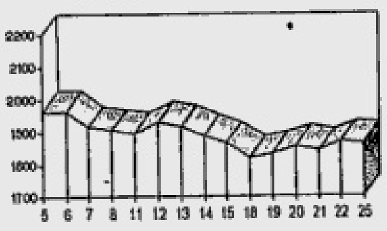
per ounce Hong Kong, April 22, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 0.41% lower

SHARE prices closed 0.41 percent lower yesterday in lackluster trade with most investors on the sidelines waiting for the passage of a key tax measure in Congress, dealers said.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



A sharp rise in electricity rates announced by the state regulator last week also dampened sentiment given concerns it could fan inflation further and add to company costs.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 7.57 points to 1,860.56 after trading between 1,851.24 and 1,872.69 on volume of 328 million shares worth P633 million.

The broader all-shares index fell 5.85 points to 1,136.36.

Losers led gainers 65 to 14, with 43 stocks unchanged.

Gains in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co, the most actively traded stock, limited the market's decline. It closed P5 higher at P1,340.

AFP

T-bill rates decline across the board

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY bill rates declined across all maturities yesterday as the high level of liquidity among banks and developments on the fiscal front encouraged them to scramble for the short-term government securities.

"Much of the previous concerns of the market have subsided due to recent good news, such as the government's budget deficit being within target," Deputy Treasurer Eduardo Mendiola said in a briefing after yesterday's auction.

The bellwether 91-day treasury bill rate, used by banks as a benchmark in pricing their loans, fell by 10.6 basis points to 6.551 percent. The 182-day rate also eased by 12.3 basis points to 7.727 percent. The 364-day bills fetched 8.678 percent, or 11.4 basis points lower than the previous week's level.

The volume of bids reflected the huge appetite for the virtually risk-free government securities.

Tenders for the three-month debt instrument reached P8.4 billion, making it oversubscribed by more than four times. Bids for the six-month and one-year debt paper amounted to P6.58 billion and P6.78 billion, respectively, reflecting a over-subscription of more than three times.

The government's debt offering for each of tenor was only P2 billion. The Treasury's auction committee raised in full the P6 billion it was scheduled to borrow yesterday.

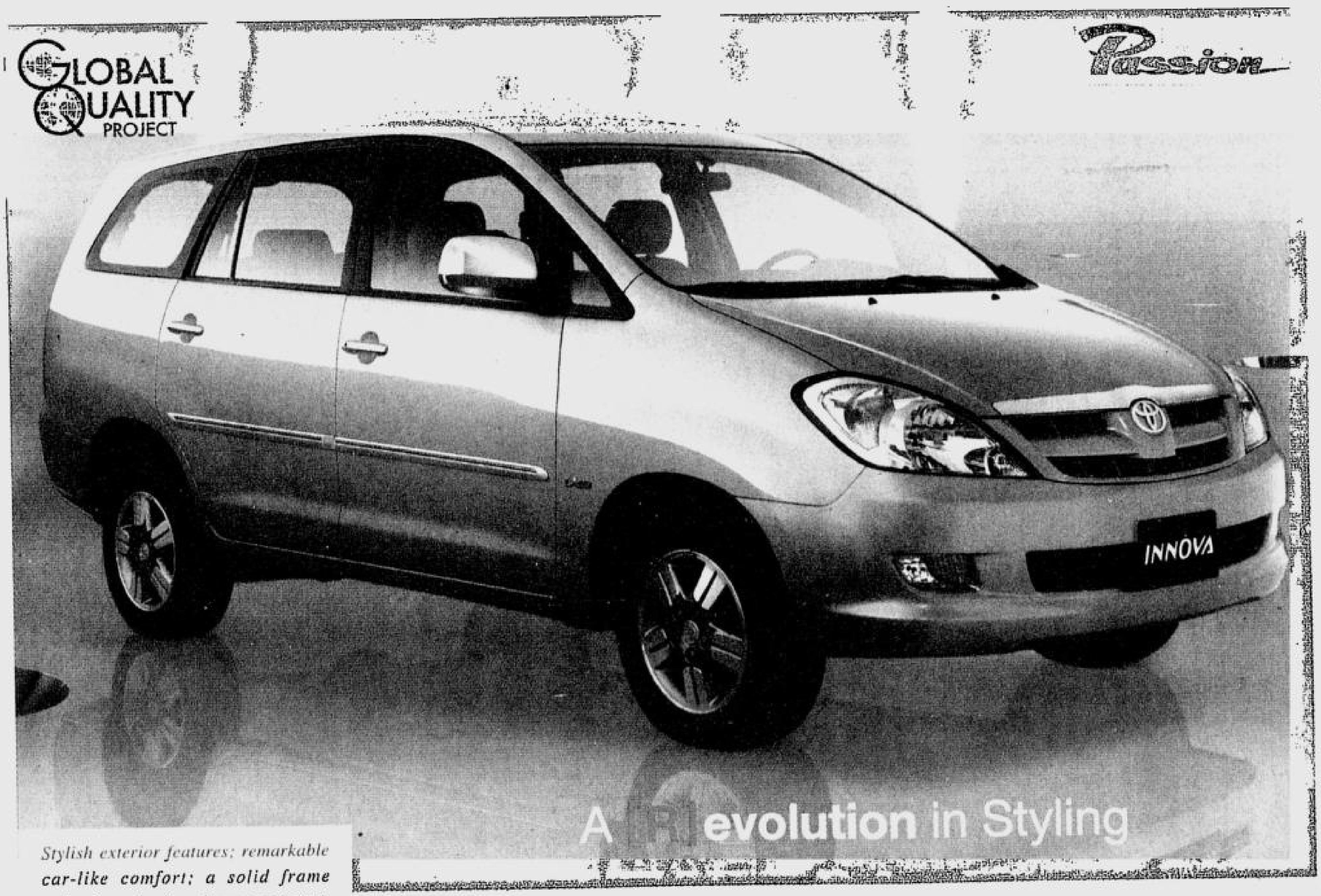
Mendiola said banks were pleased with the government's fiscal data for the first quarter of the year. The government's budget deficit for the period reached only P63.5 billion, or 18 percent lower than the ₱77.8-billion official target.

The Treasury official said the credit market also took its cue from the strengthening peso, which closed Friday at 54.17 to a dollar, gaining 38 centavos from the previous day's 54.55.

The recent increase in the power rates charged by National Power Corp. also contributed to positive market sentiment, Mendiola said. He explained that higher rates would make the debt-ridden state-owned power firm less dependent on the cash-strapped national government.

Mendiola said the positive sentiment of the credit market was

T-BILL/ B3



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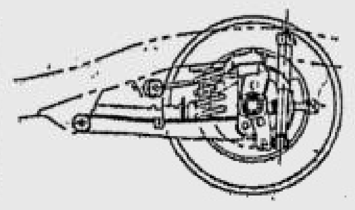

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Tweaks of the trade

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IT'S possible that even medical science cannot tell if, by a cruel stroke of fate, many of our public officials are born without the biological parts that allow people to think.

Still, down here in our barangay, the guys just know it as a fact of life. We have a lot of officials who have brains as big as mongo beans—the green ones, okay!

That becomes obvious, I must agree, the moment you look at some of their decisions. One good example is this plan of some bright guys at the Bureau of Customs.

It seems that, based on word going around at the piers, that the bureau will soon allow the importation of "powdered" drinks at the unbelievable duty of 1 percent.

What's more, that give-away import duty will likely stay for good! Can you believe that - 1 percent duty?

I don't know what trick of trade happened there, but the customs guys might as well just give the importers the key to the national minting plant.

* * *

THAT plan of some bright officials of the customs bureau, if it does not miscarry, is just another step toward our dream to become a nation of traders.

You know—no more manufacturing! Who cares, anyway, that factories require a lot more jobs than, say, a fish ball stand?

Even the multinational companies here only want to do trading. Not a few of them, as you know, already closed down their manufacturing facilities.

The latest one is the US toilet maker American Standard. As a bonus to its hand-to-mouth Filipino suppliers, the rich US multinational just refused to pay any of them.

One fine day, anyway, in return for the huge profits they already made here, many of those multinationals decided to get rid of their Filipino factory workers.

They came up with the profitable idea to just import "finished goods" from their own factories in the countries around us, and then sell the imported items here.

Of course, they also do not export anything from this country, which means that they are giving us invaluable help in squandering our hard-earned dollars.

* * *

ANYWAY, that latest plan of the customs bureau for that one-percent duty on "powdered" drink, may have something to do with this famous US multinational called Kraft.

Kraft is the maker of the powdered drink called "Tang." For a lot of years, and a lot of income, millions upon millions of profit, Kraft made the same "Tang" brand here.

It so happened that our pea-brained officials decided to kill our industries with huge tariff cuts.

Those cuts were done in the name of "import liberalization," which was part of "globalization," an original US invention.

Kraft thus stopped making "Tang" here. Thanks to our tariff cuts, it could import the product from its factories in the countries around us, and it could make more money.

As a concession to this country for the additional jobless people it created, Kraft told the customs bureau that it should pay that excessive 1-percent duty on imported "Tang."

Because medical science had no way of proving the size of their brains, anyway, some guys at the customs bureau agreed to the plan.

* * *

AS a condition, the customs bureau required Kraft to post a bond. The money should be able to cover for an import duty on "Tang" at 48 percent.

Let me explain. That 48 percent has always been the "normal" import duty on powdered drinks. That's because 48 percent has been the import duty on sugar.

Based on government rules, if more than 70 percent of the imported FINISHED product is sugar, it is considered sugar. You pay 48 percent, right?

Wrong, according to Kraft. The US multinational insisted that "Tang," whatever its content, is a "finished product."

Never mind that the so-called powdered drinks, not to mention softdrinks, are really just a lot of sugar. Well, okay, with some color! Oh, and a little flavor!

Anyway, since the customs bureau and the US company Kraft could not agree on the duty on "Tang," they instead agreed on the usual trick called "compromise."

For the meantime, Kraft would pay an import duty of 1-percent, but it should post a bond as if it were paying for 48 percent.

Should the time come when the customs bureau would decide, eventually, that the duty was actually only one percent, Kraft would get back the bond.

That time, from what I hear at the piers, is nearing.

* * *

IF the customs bureau indeed follows the sound advice of Kraft about the 1-percent import duty on powdered juice, the bureau will have to cough up some P600 million.

That's the value of the cash bond that importers posted, based on an import duty of 48 percent on powdered juice. The bureau will have to give back the bond.

And everybody thought that this financially challenged cute administration of Gloriaetta would not hesitate to kill us with more taxes just to raise its revenues.

Even Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima already went on record that he would want to raise our idiotically low tariffs, if only to raise funds for this cute administration.

Now here comes the customs bureau, headed by somebody who has links with a US multinational company, just trying to give away P600 million. Terrific!

* * *

WORD is out that, through a little tweak of the trade rules, the customs bureau already found a way to justify the "finished product" argument of Kraft.

What will happen? Well, for one, all the other factories of powdered juice here will also close down.

They will also want to put up factories somewhere else, and just import the "finished goods."

This is already happening in the garment business. What's another industry gone wrong, right?

For the information of our bright public officials, the import duty on "pre-mixed" juice is 5 percent. The "pre-mixed" must be packed here. It is, in effect, just a raw material.

Thus, it is not covered by the amazing Kraft argument for 1-percent duty on the finished product.

And so, if the local factories must pay 5 percent for raw material, while the importers like Kraft pay only 1 percent for finished goods, do you think our officials are just plain stupid, or what?

* * *

ASIDE from the thousands of jobless people that the good-bye trail of those powdered juice makers will leave behind, we may as well kill the sugar industry.

As I said, powdered drinks contain a lot of sugar. To serve the needs of their manufacturers here, our sugar industry invested a lot of money to retool its plants.

Sugar mills already invested in the equipment to make a special type of sugar called "granulated," which is used in making powdered juice.

Now, we have something like 29 sugar centrals, making raw sugar, plus some 12 refineries, making "granulated" sugar. All in all, the sugar mills provide some 20,000 jobs.

In the sugar farms, some 400,000 are working. Meaning, about two million individuals are dependent on the sugar farms.

Those are the guys who will be hurt by that 1-percent bright decision of the customs bureau.

Don't tell me that we will just let those people take up arms. To think, our bright officials are already talking about the possibility of civil unrest in these hard times. Tell me about it.

Bacnotan acquires majority stake in Cagayan de Oro school

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

BACNOTAN Consolidated Industries Inc. (BCII), the flagship company of the Phinma Group, said it has agreed to buy 56 percent of Cagayan de Oro College Inc. for P173.3 million, according to its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The acquisition was part of BCII's plan to acquire a network of three to five colleges and universities with a total student population of 50,000 to 75,000, officials had said.

CDO College is a non-sectarian college put up in 1947 that offers degrees in criminology, education, computer science and engineering, among others.

CDO College was BCII's latest acquisition after investing in Araullo University in Cabanatuan City.

AU has 6,000 students and has recently undergone a P64-million upgrade of its facilities.

BCII said it was also evaluating the possibility of investing in another school in Iloilo.

The Philippine Investment-Management, Inc. (Phinma) Group is re-engineering its flagship firm, BCII, into a services-oriented firm, encouraged by the prospects of the sector as a key driver of the economy in the future.

Aside from educational services, the Phinma Group has interests in steel, in power generation and oil exploration, in low cost housing development, and in financial services.

For the first quarter, BCII expects to earn roughly P120 million from dividend payments from a subsidiary after the sale of the group's cement interest.

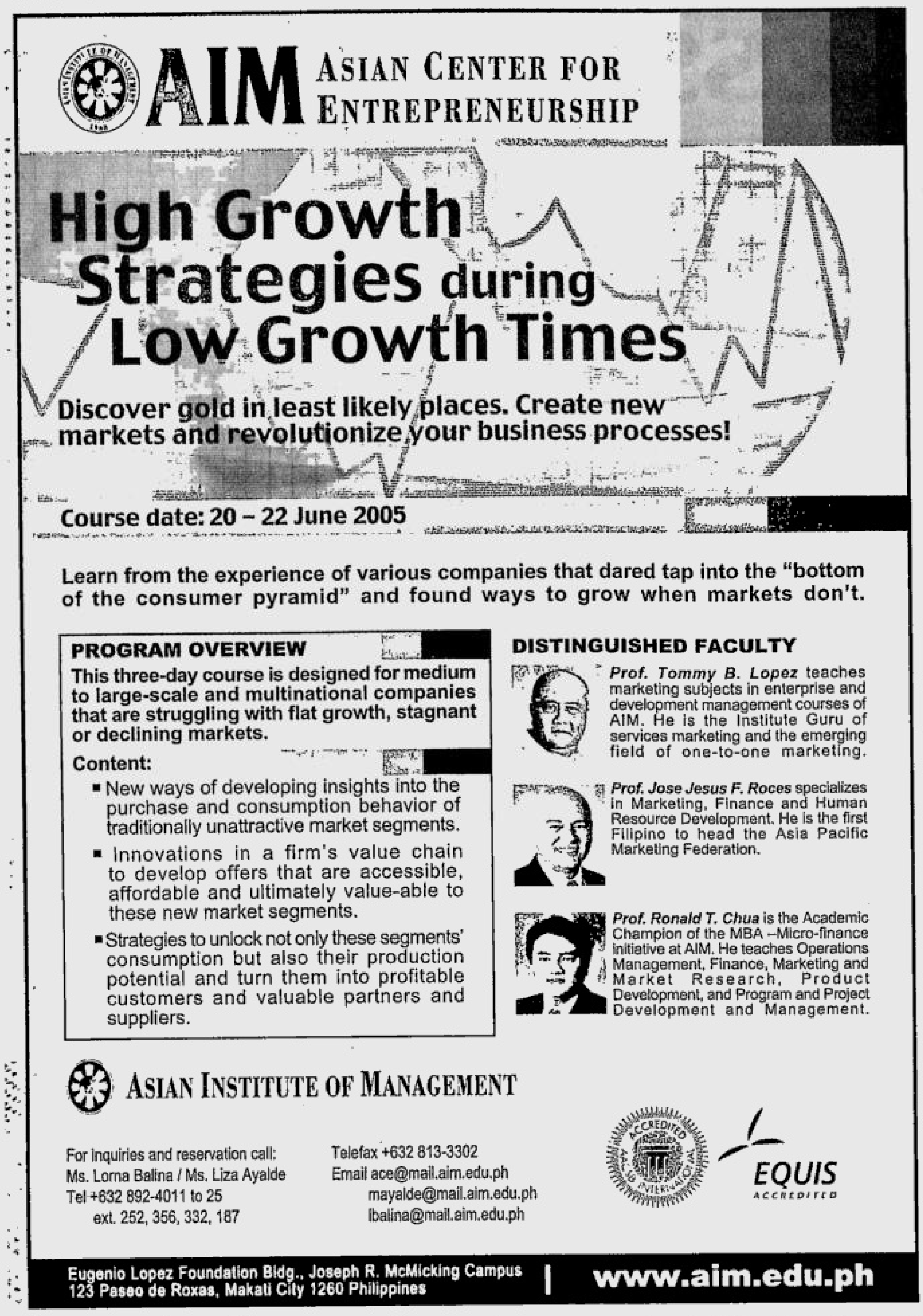
It also said that with the proceeds gained from the sale of its cement interest, BCII was now debt free after it paid of P5.2 billion in loans and preferred shares.

BCII recently unloaded its entire cement interest to Cemco Holdings, a subsidiary of Switzerland's Holcim Ltd , saying it could no longer stay competitive in the cement industry.

BCII and unit Atlas Cement Corp sold their combined 51-percent stake in Union Cement Holdings, a major shareholder of Union Cement.

The deal was valued at $214 million consisting of $89 million for the direct holdings of BCII and $125 million for Atlas' shareholdings.

BCII's strategy is to diversify its portfolio into businesses in the services sector, including education, energy, financial services and affordable housing.



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T-bill rates decline across the board

From page B1

expected to continue today during the auction for the seven-year treasury bonds. "Considering the liquidity shown today by banks, I believe the (T-bond) auction will also be well received by the market," he said.

Mendiola said that while banks considered the power rate increase a positive development for the government's fiscal health, the equities market saw it as something that could accelerate inflation and therefore impact on corporate earnings.

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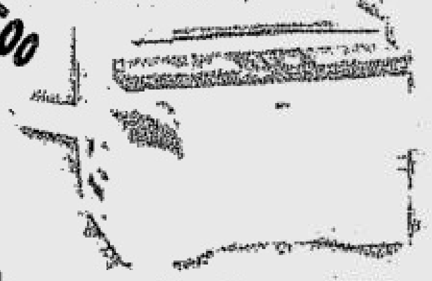

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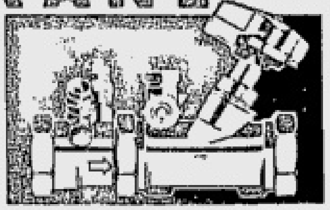

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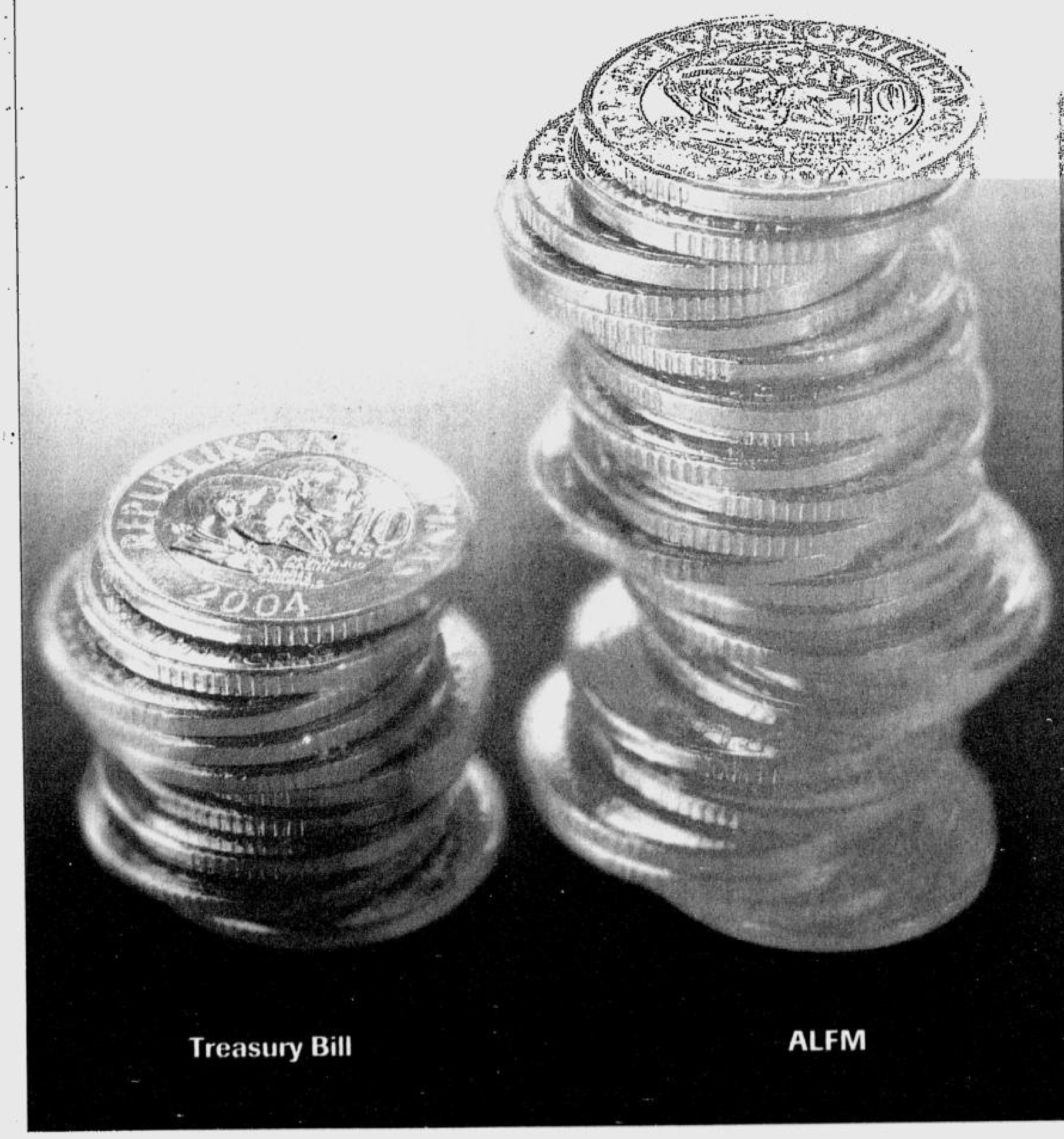

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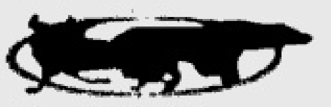

Ron Nathan

I AM happy to report that I do not have egg on my face as the result of telling everyone to BUY first thing last Tuesday. It was indeed the bottom and those who followed my advice were rewarded. The Phisix rose steadily on Tuesday and Wednesday, had a minor reaction on Thursday, then surged on Friday for a net gain of 57 points.

Naturally, I am delighted and wish that other analysts would make unequivocal calls. Perhaps they are afraid of being wrong occasionally, but nobody expects them to be right every time and it would certainly provide guidance to readers. With the help of my degree of risk indicator, I have called 16 cycles, 8 tops and 8 bottoms, with extraordinary accuracy.

It so happens that my SELL signal 7 weeks ago coincided with my writing day and the index subsequently fell 177 points. My BUY signal last week also occurred on my writing day so I was able to predict the top and the bottom in advance on both occasions. This will only happen once in 25 times and is only possible because it is a momentum indicator, admittedly a complex one.

Momentum does not measure the change in an index or a stock, it measures the rate of change, which is quite a different matter. For example, if a stock moves from P1 to P2 in a month, then P3, P4 and P5 at equal intervals, an arithmetic chart would show a straight line, but a semi-logarithmic chart would show that the rate of change was slowing down. In the first month, it rose 100 percent; in the second, 50 percent; the third by 33 percent and the fourth by 25 percent. So it is losing momentum.

If at the beginning of the following month, the stock only moved from P5 to P5.10, the arithmetic chart would still be rising, but the momentum would have fallen sharply and given warning of an imminent top. That is why trend lines and trend channels should be drawn on semi-log paper. Unfortunately, this is not very practical unless you have a computer.

Because it is easier, most technical analysts use lag indicators such as moving averages. If you are using a 50-day moving average, this will tell you what you should have done a month ago. I see no merit in this, nor do I believe in Elliott Wave, as it has no mathematical foundation. There is no conceivable reason why a bull market should go up in 5 waves and go down in 3.

Although, I am pleased with the continued success of the indicator, it has taken out all the fun out of investing. I was watching the last day of the Masters when Tiger Woods blew a 3-stroke lead over Dimarco. I was glued to the TV until some well-meaning idiot called to tell me that Tiger had won in a playoff on the first hole. I continued to watch but all the excitement was gone. That is how I feel now.

In the future, I will concentrate not on the cycles but on various aspects of the local and international markets, particularly the US. It is rather unfortunate that Americans tend to go from manic depression to euphoria, and back again, all in the space of a few days. A short while ago, both the DOW and the Nasdaq hit their lowest levels for the year, and there was a record short position, meaning that the majority of players were bearish.

Then INTEL came out with excellent results and everything changed. Worries about the price of oil, inflation and the record balance of payments were forgotten and the DOW rallied over 200 points, its biggest gain in 2 years. The trading floor was littered with tranquilizers, Valium and marijuana. Next day, it was down again and the litter consisted of uppers, speed, Prozac and heroin.

The sad thing about this is that all markets around the world follow the US market because of its size and importance. So when it fell 400 points in one week, every Asian and European market followed suit; when it jumped 200 points in one day, all markets rallied. This will always happen and that is why I follow the US so closely. The Producer Price index and the Consumer Price index were both considerably higher than expected, a sure sign that inflation is in the offing so the FED will continue raising rates at a measured pace. For the record, I expect a much higher number of jobs to be created this month, compared to last month, and that should give the market a fillip. The unemployment rate is shown on American Idle.

There is no point speculating on the final version of the VAT bill as we will know it soon, but I remain optimistic that the lawmakers will cooperate in the spirit of national survival. If you include the government owned companies such as Napocor, then interest payable is 130 percent of GDP. I predicted in my newsletter that Napocor would shortly receive an increase and a few days later, it was granted partially. This was absolutely necessary so that the company would achieve viability and could be privatized. In this way, the government could recover a substantial amount of capital and reduce its liabilities.

Unfortunately, this will increase consumers' electricity bills to such an extent that wealth and power will be demonstrated, not by owning a BMW, a Mercedes or a yacht, but by the ability to run an air-conditioner.

I also wrote in the INQUIRER twice that the government MUST give the jeepney drivers a P1 increase, and P30 a day for the workers, if they want to avert a national strike or worse. Cory Aquino reiterated this warning last week but it looks now as if a wage increase might be deferred so I am out of this market ahead of May 1.

A strange thing happened about 10 days ago. On any given day, some foreign brokers buy SM while others sell. But on this particular day, all 8 brokers sold and 2 local brokers had to absorb 2 million shares so there was net selling of P571 million. About 4 hours later, a complaint was filed with the SEC against the company. Was it inside information or did all 8 Fund Managers receive divine inspiration that morning? I do not think that the complaint is serious because a lower court dismissed it but the uncertainty until the Supreme Court makes its decision will deter investors. In the meantime, SMPH looks cheaper.

Ayala is more likely to win control of Maynilad Water Services than DMC because of its greater experience but investors have been selling Manila Water on fears that it will get diluted.

Turnover on Monday was incredibly low, particularly if you remove the cross sales on TEL, ALI and FPH. Foreign brokers were barely active but have been constant sellers over the past month. Investors remain on the sidelines waiting to see what next week holds in store for us. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

SM Prime to invest in more malls

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

MALL operator SM Prime Holdings Inc. is setting aside between P5.5 billion and P6 billion in capital expenditures this year for the construction of new malls.

SM Prime president Hans Sy said after SM Prime's stockholders meeting yesterday that the company planned to open four new malls this year: San Lazaro in Manila, Molino in Cavite, Valenzuela and the Mall of Asia in Pasay City, which will be the biggest in Asia.

Soon adding to the list are malls in Sta. Rosa, Laguna; Clark in Pampanga; Lipa, Batangas and Vito Cruz in Manila.

SM Prime has also set aside P300 million for property acquisitions this year. He declined, however, to indicate the location of the new properties.

Sources added that SM Prime planned to open a new mall in Tarlac on a four-hectare property by 2007.

Sy said that while there were already many malls in operation, there was still a large room for growth.

SM owns and operates 19 super malls in key cities nationwide. It earned P4.62 billion last year, up from P4.18 billion the previous year.

Sy also told reporters that there were no plans yet of folding the Sy family's private investments in three malls in China into SM Prime.

SY

The SM group likewise had no plans of building malls elsewhere in Asia, he said.

Also at the company's stockholders' meeting in Makati Shangri-La, SM Prime declared a total of P2.3 billion in cash dividends to shareholders on record as of May 25 and payable on June 20.

The company has no plans to tap the debt market for new loans for its projects.

Total debt last year stood at P18 billion while cash generated amounted to P15.5 billion.

This resulted in net debt of P2.5 billion last year.

The company also has no exposure in dollar-denominated debts since it has fully covered its dollar loans with peso hedges.

It expects to grow its net earnings by 10 to 11 percent this year, in line with its growth performance over the past few years.

Management takeover of CAP pushed

From page B1

The committee said the SEC should be able to anticipate the impact of a possible non-servicing of obligations on plan holders. It should also come up with a settlement plan that would allocate the remaining funds of the company not only among plan holders with maturing obligations but also of those plan holders availing in the future.

In the short-term, the options that can be studied by the SEC include a possible suspension of payments to all plan holders until a full assessment of CAP's actual financial position has been made and a possible partial settlement of current obligations due this year.

Another recommendation was for the Commission to ask its Compliance and Enforcement Department (CED) to conduct an independent investigation on the possible fraudulent activities by CAP's board and management.

Among these were the alleged solicitation of investments even after the SEC had suspended CAP's dealer's license, the non-preservation of cash collections from the suspense accounts, continuous collection of payments from suspense accounts, continuous collection of payments from existing plan holders without depositing a portion of the collections to the trust fund, the alleged dissipation of assets through excessive spending for public relations work and advertising campaigns, the reported bouncing checks issued to plan holders, and the alleged priority given to settling related parties claims over plan holder claims.

The SEC may also want to consider soliciting the assistance of the anti-money laundering council in identifying, locating and freezing the assets of officers and directors should there be a need to run after their personal assets or file necessary action in the regular courts for attachment of these properties, the oversight committee said in its report.

The committee also proposed that the SEC adopt a more aggressive public dissemination campaign by issuing public notices warning investors not to buy CAP plans while their dealer's license is suspended, announcing to the public that it should report to the Commission any person that purports to sell CAP plans during the period of suspension, advising plan holders to pay premiums directly to CAP's trustee bank and not to the CAP agents, and directing plan holders to report anomalous representations and activities to SEC.

It also suggested that the SEC solicit help of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas in probing possible violations by CAP's trustee bank of its duty in managing the firm's trust funds.

The committee also recommended that the SEC revisit a number of long-term solutions to CAP's problem, among them:

- the declaration of a partial suspension of payments and distribution of a proportionate amount to plan holders, or a moratorium of payments over a period of about two years to allow the company to rehabilitate itself under a new management;
- offering of a termination plan to existing plan holders;
- conversion of traditional plans to fixed value plans;
- sale of its fund to another pre-need firm;
- sale of fixed-value plans to another pre-need firm even at a discount, but giving plan holders a way out by terminating their policies, and
- conversion to cash of all receivables and restructure all liabilities.

The SEC's oversight committee was composed of three assistant directors, namely Merle Joy Pascual, Ma. Gracia Casals and Carol Lema. Its report culminated five months of oversight supervision over CAP.

The committee said that CAP's capital deficiency as of December 2003 stood at P5.4 billion and may rise to P9.2 billion using unaudited figures as of December 2004 submitted by CAP.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

United States	Dollar	0.765345171	1.000000	54.3900
Japan	Yen	0.007216	0.009428	0.5128
United Kingdom	Pound	1.464871	1.914000	104.1025
Hongkong	Dollar	0.098164	0.128261	6.9761
Switzerland	Franc	0.648103	0.846812	46.0581
Canada	Dollar	0.619813	0.809848	44.0476
Singapore	Dollar	0.464803	0.607312	33.0317
Australia	Dollar	0.598862	0.782473	42.5587
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.030201	2.652661	144.2782
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.204092	0.266667	14.5040
Brunei	Dollar	0.463396	0.605473	32.9317
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000079	0.000103	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.019415	0.025368	1.3798
UAE	Dirham	0.208387	0.272279	14.8093
Euro	Euro	1	1.306600	71.0660
Argentina	Peso	0.263912	0.344828	18.7552
Brazil	REAL	0.30203	0.394633	21.4641
Denmark	Kroner	0.134243	0.175402	9.5401
India	Rupee	0.017534	0.022910	1.2461
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.201433	0.263193	14.3151
Mexico	New Peso	0.069206	0.090424	4.9182
New Zealand	Dollar	0.560446	0.732279	39.8287
Norway	Kroner.	0.122578	0.160161	8.7112
Pakistan	Rupee	0.01288	0.016829	0.9153
South Africa	Rand	0.127123	0.166099	9.0341
Korea	Won	0.000762	0.000996	0.0542
Sweden	Kroner	0.10915	0.142615	7.7568
Syria	Pound	0.014744	0.019264	1.0478
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024351	0.031817	1.7305
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000357	0.000466	0.0253

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, April 25, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.7	3.7	3,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	26	26	26	26	6,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	49	49	47.5	48.5	974,700
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	3,460
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.69	0.7	0.69	0.7	260,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	47	47	46.5	47	10,700
International Exch. Bank	18	18	18	18	20,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32.5	31.5	32	255,800
Philippine National Bank	31	31.5	31	31.5	600
Security Bank Corp.	27.5	27.5	27	27	102,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	29	29	29	29	1,100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	20,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	1,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2430	2430	2430	2430	10
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	256,000
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.5	14.5	14	14	40,100
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.06	1.06	2,400,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	5,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	840	845	840	840	8,080
Ipeople Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.05	4.05	47,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.044	0.044	0.044	.044	200,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.049	0.049	.049	500,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.08	2.1	2.08	2.1	18,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.15	719,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1340	1345	1340	1340	159,030
Ivantage Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.66	.66	380,000
Philweb Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	.019	22,500,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.5	23,900
Manila Electric Co. B	23.5	23.5	22.5	22.5	556,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	2,171,000
Petron Corp.	3.55	3.6	3.45	3.5	2,198,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.18	557,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7	7	6.9	7	233,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.48	350,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.96	0.96	0.96	.96	2,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3	3	2.95	2.95	397,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	30,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2	69,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	33.5	33.5	33.5	33.5	132,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	242,900
RFM Corp.	0.85	0.85	0.85	.85	350,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	.29	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	58	57	58	72,300
San Miguel Corp. B	82	83	82	83	39,600
Universal Robina Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	46,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	12,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.009	0.009	0.009	.009	23,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7	7	6.8	6.9	3,266,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	230,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.35	4.4	4.35	4.35	865,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.043	0.044	0.039	.042	500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.92	1.98	1.92	1.98	116,000
APC Group Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	.36	10,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	200,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.72	0.72	0.72	.72	10,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.02	0.99	1	2,650,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	1,670,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.235	0.24	0.23	.23	810,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.34	0.32	.33	140,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.15	3	3.05	324,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	2,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	245,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	44.5	44.5	42.5	43	1,548,200
Global Equities Inc.	0.0925	0.0925	0.0925	.0925	100,000
Ionics Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	232,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.8	1.8	108,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	171,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	.14	10,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.42	.42	1,890,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	.225	300,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	100,000
SM Investments Corp.	245	247	245	247	227,840
South China Resources Inc	0.7	0.7	0.7	.7	140,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	.33	20,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.23	8,560,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	5,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.75	0.77	0.75	.75	170,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	300,000
Pryce Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	480,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.14	1.18	1,654,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.9	.9	360,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.56	1.56	1,800,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.32	2,940,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	14	14	13.5	13.75	525,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series J	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,300
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	4,800
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.8	10,150,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.84	0.84	0.84	.84	140,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.27	.27	2,120,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	300,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.18	.18	600,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	2,840,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	596,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	330,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.64	.64	260,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	.19	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.5	4.55	4.5	4.55	500,000
SM Development Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.54	1.54	60,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.3	1,858,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	9,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	4.95	4.95	4.85	4.85	337,000
Benguet Corp. A	8.2	8.2	7.8	8	37,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	3,680,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.37	0.38	0.35	.35	14,440,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	55,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.022	0.022	0.022	.022	28,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	.007	65,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.96	0.96	0.96	.96	80,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.16	1.16	1.12	1.12	878,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	37.5	38	37.5	37.5	60,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	18,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	7,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	15,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.17	.17	100,000

DISCLOSURES

SAN Miguel Pure Foods Co. will hold its regular meeting of stockholders on May 20, 2 p.m. at the 2/F Executive Dining Room, SMC Head Office Complex, Mandaluyong City. Only stockholders of record as of April 1 are entitled to vote during the meeting.

* * *

FIL-HISPANO Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 27, at the Makati Sports Club Inc., Salcedo Village, Makati. Stockholders of record as of April 15 will be entitled to notice and vote at the meeting.

* * *

GINEBRA San Miguel, Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 19, 2 p.m. at the Executive Dining Room, SMC Head Office Complex, Mandaluyong City. Stockholders as of April 1 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

LORENZO Shipping Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 7, 9 a.m. at the Dusit Hotel, Makati City. Record date for stockholders entitled to vote at the meeting is May 3.

* * *

CITYSTATE Savings Bank Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 31, 2 p.m. at the 20/F Citystate Centre Bldg., Pasig City. Only stockholders of record as of April 15 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

BACNOTAN Consolidated Industries Inc. disclosed its share purchase agreement with Cagayan de Oro College Inc. for the purchase of 56 percent of the issued and outstanding shares for a total consideration of P173,295,834.95.

* * *

CHEMICAL Industries of the Philippines Inc. disclosed the postponement of the May 3 annual stockholders' meeting, as requested by the Philippine Indochem Corp. and Chemholding Corp.

* * *

MANILA Water Co. Inc. disclosed its clarification of a news article. The company has not made any commitments in connection with the potential investment in Maynilad.

* * *

SAN Miguel Properties Inc. will hold its regular stockholders' meeting on May 18, 2 p.m. at the 24/F San Miguel Properties Centre, Mandaluyong City. Stockholders as of April 1 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

MABUHAY Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 27, 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Oriental Manila, Makati City. Record date is April 15. ***Compiled by: Erika Sarmiento, PDI Research***

RP strategic paradigm on China and Taiwan

By Jose P. Leviste Jr.
Chairman, Philippine Business Leaders Forum, Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) Corporate Network

(First of two parts)

HOW Manila will position itself diplomatically in the face of the widening political rift between Beijing and Washington on Taiwan is a case in point that becomes even more relevant with the upcoming visit to Manila of Chinese President Hu Jintao.

The Philippines does not want to see the conflict escalate into something more serious, lest our economy will suffer, since the Great China market—China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao—is now the largest destination of Philippine exports.

The Philippines is so close geographically to China and Taiwan that our municipal fishermen in the north share common fishing grounds with their large commercial fishing vessels. An outbreak of military hostilities between China and Taiwan, which remains a possibility at this point, would have thousands of Taiwanese boat people "migrating" into the Philippines.

So passionate is China about the Taiwan issue that the first statement it issued on the election of Pope Benedict XVI is that Vatican should respect the One-China policy and break diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

Hottest growth engine

A China-Taiwan war, which would certainly impact the Philippine economy, is the last thing the global economy needs at present. If there is one country that has revived the global economy after the 9-11 incidents in the US, it is China. Over the past two decades, China has emerged to be the hottest growth engine in the world today.

The Chinese economy has been growing so fast, that its government had to intervene to prevent the economy from overheating. The Chinese government orchestrated a design for the soft landing of its economy, so that it would post only an 8.5-percent growth in 2005, a slowdown from its 9-10 percent annual gross domestic product (GDP) expansion in the past.

However, growth still reached 9.5 percent in the first quarter of 2005 despite the Chinese government's curbing of bank lending. The best that the Philippines could muster was a 6.1-percent growth in 2004, the highest in 15 years, and indicators show this "surprising" growth won't be sustained this year.

World's largest

With around 1.3 billion people, China is striving to be the world's largest economy, with some analysts even predicting China could grab that "title" from the United States within the next 20 years. This, of course, is viewed with concern by the US and Japan, which both fear that China's increasing economic might may be accompanied by rising military ambition.

Such fear on the part of the world's two largest economies is not without basis at all, if one is to consider China's territorial claim over the South China Sea and its threat to assert its right over Taiwan.

China's impressive aerospace technology reminds the US of how it is ready to become a superpower with nuclear capability to target the west coast of the United States. The rising nationalist sentiment among young Chinese who have been protesting for several weeks now on the revision in Japanese history books that give too little attention to the atrocities committed by the Japanese imperial army against the peoples of China, Korea, the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries during World War II, is an indication of its political assertiveness.

Dramatic rise

The Filipinos, of course, could relate to the heightened emotions of the Chinese over the issue of Japanese history books, having been exposed to the extreme violence of the war between the US forces on one side and the Japanese military on the other.

After Japan surrendered to US nuclear capability, the two nations eventually became allies and at one time were in a tight race to be the richest nation on the planet. Now, both eye with suspicion the dramatic rise of China.

The Chinese economy today, with its GDP estimated at US$1.65 trillion in 2004, or 20 times the Philippines' US$80 billion, is really a giant specially in Asia.

Chinese economic performance speaks for itself. In 2004, China had gross international reserves of US$610 billion, or nearly 38 times the Philippines' US$16 billion, and drew US$61 billion in foreign direct investments (FDIs), compared to the miniscule US$57 million that flowed into our country last year.

China's population is more than 15 times the 84 million Filipinos, and its land area of 9.6 million square kilometers is more than 30 times larger than our 300,000 square kilometers.

Unquenchable appetite

Its unquenchable appetite for raw materials and crude oil has made it the world's third largest importer, after the US and Germany, and, in the process, has unfortunately driven oil prices to their historic high this year to the detriment of oil importing countries like the Philippines.

Decades of capital buildup and infrastructure development have led to rising household income in China, where 174 million people have been lifted out of extreme poverty over 12 years of sustained economic growth from 1990 to 2002.

In the booming city of Shanghai, millions of Chinese professionals and employees have been enticed into the magnet of consumerism, which is the lifeblood of the free-market economy. Thousands of new high-rise buildings were built in Shanghai alone over the past few years. China accounts for half of the world's demand for cement today. *(To be continued.)*

RP seeks $5-B loan from China to finance mining, infra projects

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINES is planning to ask $5 billion from the Chinese government to bankroll various infrastructure and mining projects in the country.

Francis Chua, president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc., said that during a recent meeting between officials of the two countries, a Philippine Cabinet secretary informally raised the possibility of securing $5 billion in soft financing from the Chinese government.

"Secretary (Romulo) Neri proposed to a visiting Chinese official ... that a $5-billion loan package be arranged to help finance local infrastructure projects," Chua said.

The economic planning secretary said "it was just an idea being floated around."

Neri said no formal request had been made to the Chinese government, which already agreed to extend credit to two major railway projects.

China's Export-Import Bank has offered to help finance the $503-million Manila-Clark Rapid Railway System or the Northrail, as well as the $1-billion rehabilitation of the Philippine National Railways.

"There are also projects in the mining sector," added Neri, on top of other infrastructure projects that have to be financed such as highways, airports and seaports.

Several Chinese companies have expressed interest to take part in local mining projects.

The financing for the Northrail and the PNR would be in the form of official development assistance. The Arroyo administration secured the financial assistance during a state visit to China in September last year.

During the visit last year, China's Eximbank and the Northrail administration signed the $395-million loan agreement. Funding for the PNR is still being finalized.

The improvement of the country's infrastructure, especially the mass transit systems, is part of the Macapagal administration's priority program although local business groups have cautioned the government against forging expensive deals.

The federation of Filipino-Chinese businessmen said it would focus on investment opportunities in the countryside.

The group is embarking on an investment marketing program that will involve identifying opportunities all over the country.

The Filipino-Chinese group will also come up with a more focused investment priority list for each province.

"The plan is to identify and make a list of all investment possibilities within six months," Chua said. "We are mobilizing 170 of our local chambers to find good investment opportunities in the provinces."

The local chambers of the federation will also identify tourism spots that can be promoted and developed.

Pacific Plans claims it met tuition obligations

PACIFIC Plans Inc. was able to pay in full all claims over the past 14 years, even though the company was not required in its contract to pay the increasing tuition caused by the government's 1990 deregulation of school fees, a PPI official said in a statement.

"We tried everything to help our plan holders, although we could have easily hidden behind our contract which shields us from exorbitant obligations arising from a change in government rules or policy," PPI president Ernesto Garcia said.

Section XV of the contract specifically frees PPI from liability, "... resulting from (natural calamities), government legislation or regulation ... that are beyond the control of Pacific, in connection with the implementation of its obligations under this agreement..."

PPI in 1986 started selling open-ended educational plans, promising to pay its scholars' tuition regardless of the amount. At that time, the government capped tuition increases by no more than 10 percent per year, allowing all pre-need companies to predict precisely how much they needed each year to meet obligations.

But in 1990, the cap on college and high school tuition increases was removed on condition that parents and students would be "consulted." Elementary schools followed in 1993.

By 1994, the government removed the last remaining restriction and allowed a free-for-all, thinking that giving schools more money would improve the quality of education.

In the following school year, 1995-96, Garcia said the schools, particularly those categorized as "exclusive," jacked up their tuition by as much as 36 percent. For instance, a plan sold for only P16,300 in 1986 is now getting high school benefits totaling almost P300,000.

"There was no way Pacific Plans, or any company for that matter, could earn enough to cover those steady annual increases," Garcia said. "But we paid everybody, using our operating profits through those years."

But the company, he added, cannot do this indefinitely.

PPI early this month went to court to seek suspension of payment and rehabilitation. It said its cash was just enough to cover just the present enrollment period. There would be no more cash for the next one, the company said.

PPI is now negotiating with financial institutions to build up liquidity. It will also offer plan holders the chance to cash in on their policies, as soon as the Makati court approves the company's rehabilitation plan.

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Standardizing vocational courses yields better professionals

VOCATIONAL courses nowadays have been reduced to being taught as a livelihood program in the hopes of some people to provide immediate income to less privileged individuals.

The move, without the concerned people realizing it, has also compromised the quality of education and its service in the long run.

Tony Galvez of Tony Galvez School of Cosmetology believes that if two-year vocational courses will be standardized there will no longer be a difference between four-year degree-holder individuals to a two-year vocational graduates. This move can also increase the competency of Filipino skill-laborers.

"If workers will be given licenses before they can look for a job, it will serve as an assurance that they are indeed suitable to perform their work," he explained.

Galvez's school located at 9th Ave., Nr., cor. p. Tuazon Blvd., Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City does just that. The school offers cosmetology courses of six months, one year and two years. Six months courses would earn a student a certificate while one-year courses enables the students for an internship, the two-year vocational courses gives the specialization needed for the job he/she seeking.

Galvez wants to stress, however, that these courses are not just mere training but is taught as a curriculum based institute. Transcript of records are given at the end of each course. The school will soon offer other vocational courses in the near future to support Galvez's desire to uplift the fate of these courses in the Philippines.

"If these vocational course are instituted again, it will give them the opportunity to find a better-paying job after graduation," he said.

Galvez is also concerned about these courses being offered as a livelihood program for less privileged individuals. "I am not maligning this effort by certain offices, however I feel that the quality of the skills might be compromised."

"It will be only limited to manpower," he said. "There will be no desire to do better and upgrade their skills in the future if they don't have enough knowledge on the course".

The government can look at these professionals as a revenue-generating individuals as potential tax payers. Once they get their license, they are then obliged to pay their dues to the government. In this way, taxes will be spread out to many individuals and companies.

He also stressed that it is much safer for all individuals if the one who services them has a license. "In this way", he said, "people are guaranteed a better and honest service because no professional would want their license revoked."

Galvez made Europe and the United States as an example, where makeup artists, hair stylists, colorists, etc. need to go to school, specialize, take board exam and get their license to be able to get a decent job. And in return they can demand a better compensation than what they get if they didn't study the skill they have now.

The Tony Galvez School of Cosmetology only accepts high school graduates so as not to compromise the quality of education and knowledge they would want to impart. The school aims to revive the dying industry of vocational courses and tap the importance of skills in jobs available for people.

"Students must be given other reasonable options if they cannot afford university courses," Galvez states. "They have all the right to have a good life and people will also be assured of quality services", he adds.

The Tony Galvez School of Cosmetology is now accepting high school graduates who wants to pursue a career of their own. It can be reached at 912-5930 and 923-4370 or email tgalvez117@yahoo.com.

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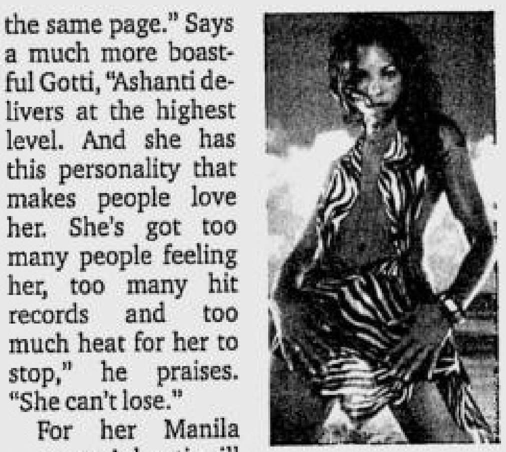
AZALEA GROUP OF COMPANIES NAMES INSURER, CONSULTANT

myAyala, Azalea Technology Investments Inc, and CNG Global Data Hub of Azalea Group of Companies appoint AsianLife and General Assurance Corp (AsianLife & General), as their insurer in providing life insurance benefits for its executives and employees and Ayala Aon Risk Services Inc (Ayala Aon) as its insurance consultant. Shown are (front, from left) myAyala and Azalea finance, HR and admin manager Luisa Castaneda, and the general manager Richard Moya, AsianLife & General president and CEO Eulogio A. Mendoza and EVP Bobby M. Alfonzo, (back, from left) AsianLife & General AVP Rogelio M. Sotelo, Ayala Aon account manager Cely Estacion, and account manager Sam Meris, and AsianLife & General senior manager Concepcion N. Roble.

Aww Baby! Ashanti: Live in Manila



JENNIFER Lopez, Ja Rule, Big Punisher, Fat Joe. She's worked with some of the industry's best-writing lyrics and singing hooks that help their records reach the top of the music charts. And on her debut album, Ashanti's lead single, "Foolish," made waves at radio, received heavy rotation on urban stations. Aside from having a rare blend of beauty, sexiness and sex appeal, Ashanti has one of the rarest voice qualities that flips hardcore songs and makes 'em sweet. And that's what makes Ashanti, not only the hottest property, but as the hot chocolate, the most delicious R&B Princess ever!

Ashanti's already well established track record has placed her on the sweet road to success. Ja Rule's "Always On Time" has broken history as Def Jam's top selling single. Her contribution to J. Lo's "I'm Real" helped give the former fly girl-turned-actress-turned-singer urban credibility.

With her own albums, Ashanti continues the saga that is sure to gain her the hip hop/R&B princess crown. And the impact she hopes to make during her reign is simple: "If you're a person who has trouble expressing yourself, all you have to do is pop in this album and it'll speak for you," she says with all sincerity. "When you listen to this album with your man or your girl, everybody will be on the same page." Says a much more boastful Gotti, "Ashanti delivers at the highest level. And she has this personality that makes people love her. She's got too many people feeling her, too many hit records and too much heat for her to stop," he praises. "She can't lose."

For her Manila concert, Ashanti will perform hits from her two albums Ashanti and Concrete Rose that sure to leave everyone hot and warm. Grooves like the feverishly sexy "Rain On Me", the head bobbing "Happy", the hip moving "Rock With U (Aww Baby)" and many more.

There's no stopping the fever. So let yourself free and allow Ashanti to heat you up.

Ashanti: Live in Manila, May 26, 8 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum is presented by Tommy Hilfiger watches, No Curfew watch stores MTV Philippines and Multramin Multi Vitamins. For inquiries, call Ticketnet at 911-5555.

Bits & Clips

Cash Back Card promo

ENJOY a very rewarding experience every time you spend using the new Citibank Cash Back Card. From now until June 30, take advantage of a bonus 3 percent on your dining expenses, utility bills, and tuition fees on top of the regular cash back rebates. The card redefines the concept of rewards for consumer spending by giving cardholders cash rebates for all charges made to the card. Members get a minimum of 0.5 percent cash rebate on all card charges. What's more, if the cardholder decides not to pay all of his outstanding balance for the month, he gets to earn a higher cash back on a tiered rate structure. The rebates are automatically credited in the cardholders' billing statement, giving cardholders immediate savings on interest payments, which consequently reduces his monthly credit card bills. To apply, call 423-3000 or log on to www.citibank.com.ph.

MC Home Depot sale

SEIZE the opportunity at MC Home Depot Summer Warehouse Sale before it's gone. The furniture and home decor sale will be on April 26 to 28, where you can get a chance to win one of the 150 Rainbow DVD players during the grand draw. MC Home depot has branches at Ortigas, Makati and Fort Bonifacio. Promo period is from April 11 to May 1.

Life and home fair

UPBEAT Exhibits and Events Management in cooperation with SM Megatrade Office invite all exhibitors to be the "Life and Home Essential fair" slated on April 29 to May 1, at the Megatrade Hall 3 of SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. Life and Home Essential is a trade fair that will gather in one roof all products and services that are life in home and nature. Interested exhibitors may get in touch with Edralyn Retuya, event planning manager, at 427-2523 or 431-3250.

MACHTOOLS AWARDS TOP DEALER

Machtools Inc, exclusive distributor in the Philippines of Metabo power tools, Elektra Beckum stationary woodworking machines, and Heller drill bits, in celebration of its 10th year of foundation, presented an achievement plaque and a gold-plated power drill to its top dealer, Cebu Belmont. Shown (from left) are Nancy Tan Yu and Kenneth Yu, general manager and president, respectively, of Machtools; Antonio Lim, president, Felomino Ang, vice president and wife Evelyn of Cebu Belmont. Other dealer-awardees were Elektro Werk, Fineline, and New Triumph.

Product FILES

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Republic of the Philippines

CITY OF OLONGAPO

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The **Olongapo City Government** through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

1. Name of Contract : **PROPOSED DESILTING OF KALAKLAN RIVER (STA. 0+000 to STA. 0+650)**
   Location : **KALAKLAN, OLONGAPO CITY**
   Brief Description : **EXCAVATION AND HAULING OF SPOILS**
   Approved Budget of the Contract (ABC) : **P10,000,000.00**
   Contract Duration : **150 CALENDAR DAYS**
2. Name of Contract : **PROPOSED DESILTING OF KALAKLAN RIVER (STA. 0+650 TO STA. 1+950)**
   Location : **KALAKLAN, OLONGAPO CITY**
   Brief Description : **EXCAVATION AND HAULING OF SPOILS**
   Approved Budget of the Contract (ABC) : **P10,000,000.00**
   Contract Duration : **150 CALENDAR DAYS**
3. Name of Contract : **PROPOSED DESILTING OF STA. RIVER (STA. 0+000 to STA. 1+400)**
   Location : **STA. RITA, OLONGAPO CITY**
   Brief Description : **EXCAVATION AND HAULING OF SPOILS**
   Approved Budget of the Contract (ABC) : **P10,000,000.00**
   Contract Duration : **150 CALENDAR DAYS**

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particular relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of the Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	May 2-9, 2005
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	May 10-12, 2005
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	May 13, 2005
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	May 16, 2005
5. Issuace of Bid Documents	May 18, 2005
6. Pre-Bid Conference	May 20, 2005
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	June 02, 2005

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the **OFFICE OF THE CITY ENGINEER**, upon their submission of LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **P500.00 to the Treasurer's Office**. Prospective bidders shall submit the eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of non-refundable amount of **P3,000.00** to the City Treasurer's Office.

The OLONGAPO CITY GOVERNMENT assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **MERLITO J. MAJARUCON**
BAC Secretariat

Noted:

(Sgd.) **JOHNNY B. CHOA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI-April 26, 2005)

MUNICIPALITY OF ECHAGUE

Echague, Isabela

Project Reference Number : ______
Name of the Project : Supply of Various Construction Materials

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Local Government Unit of Echague, Isabela, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Supply of Various Construction Materials
Location	Echague, Isabela
Approved Budget	P9,625,000.00
Delivery Period	5 Days Upon Receipt of the Award

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 6, 2005 8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M. Municipal Library
2. Pre-bid conference	May 10, 2005 2:00 P.M. Municipal Library
3. Opening of Bids	May 22, 2005 2:00 P.M. Municipal Library

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of TEN THOUSAND (P10,000.00) PESOS to the Municipal Cashier.

The Local Government Unit assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved:

(Sgd.) **LEO G. LIGGAYU**
General Services Officer V
& BAC Chairman

(PDI–April 26 & May 3, 2005)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC-MMSD 2005-011

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-MMSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements.

Schedule	Date/Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	PR No./Inquiry No.	ABC
I -	May 16, 2005 2:00 p.m Kañao Room	Laboratory Equipment for Oriental Mindoro	PB050412-MMVB2679 (PB2)	2,375,000.00
II		Substation & 69 KV Mechanical Parts for Bantayan DPP "Pielstick"	DC050331-MM-JP2765 (PB)	1,232,000.00
III	May 17, 2005 10:00 Kañao Room	Mechanical Parts for MONLOD/Casiguran DPP "Dale"	PB050417-MMVB2819	1,888,500.00

NOTE: A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules:

Schedule	Date	Time	Place
Schedule I - III	May 3, 2005	2:00 p.m.	Kañao Function Room

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Materials Management Services Division, Materials Management Dept., of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City with Tel. No 9245357/9245477 upon payment of non-refundable fee of PHP1,000.00 for Schedule 1 and PHP500.00 for Schedules II & III starting on april 19, 2005, from 8:00 to 12:00 noon only. No bid documents will be issued 3 days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, MMSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration issued by PSD/MMSD will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid.

Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution in accordance with the IRR of Republic Act. No 9184.

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit - One Percent (1%), Bank Guarantee - One and a half percent (1.5%), Surety Bond - Two and a half percent (2.5%), penal and callable on demand issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) **LORENZO S. MARCELO**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD-NPC

(PDI - April 19 & 26, 2005)

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ERRATUM

In the advertisement of **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO)** published in this paper on April 15, 2005, **Re: INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID — BORACAY INTERCONNECTION PROJECT,** Paragraph 7 ***Eligibility & Bid Documents will be available for issuance on April 30, 2005***, issuance date should have been ***April 21, 2005 instead of April 30.***

Our apology.

PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER
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- PCP Diplomate
- ***Deadline for submission of application is on April 30, 2005***
- ***Academic Year 2005 starts on July 1, 2005***

General Requirements for Application for Fellowship:

1. Medical Diploma
2. Transcript of Records with the Weighted General Average
3. Itemized Board Rating
4. Three (3) Letter of Recommendation (coming from different Doctors specifically the Training Officer &/or Director of the previous training programs)
5. Four (4) pcs. 2"x2" picture colored
6. Certificate of Residency in required specialty
7. Specialty Board Certificate in required specialty

Please address your communications to
JOSE A. YULDE, M.D.
Assistant Director
Office of Education and Research
Philippine Heart Center
East Avenue, Quezon City

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Carmela M. Ocasion or Ms. Cleopatra Q. Palencia with Tel. Nos. 925-2401 locals 3234, 3235, 3236 & 3237 and Telefax 926-9622, or you can e-mail to oer@phc.gov.ph

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PD REF NO. PB050406-PP0027
PR NOS. TTSD-05-009202/TTSD-05-009473

The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARD COMMITTEE FOR HEAD OFFICE**, wishes to invite interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid on the item listed below:

Quantity	Item Description	PR No.	Approved Budget
	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF:		
1 LOT	SCHEDULE 1: DIGITAL PROTECTION SIGNALLING EQUIPMENT (PSE), 3 SETS; WITH V.35 DIGITAL INTERFACE, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE TRAINING; complete with all necessary interface cables, software and manuals.	TTSD-05-009202	PhP1,500,000.00
1 LOT	SCHEDULE 2: DIGITAL POWER LINE CARRIER WITH INTEGRATED PROTECTION SIGNALLING EQUIPMENT, CABINET, ACCESSORIES, ELEMENT MANAGER TERMINAL AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE TRAINING; Complete with all necessary interface cables, cabinets, softwares and manuals	TTSD-05-009473	Php10,000,000.00
			Php11,500,000.00

1. Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting **April 20, 2005 to May 19, 2005** from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **One Thousand One Hundred Fifty Pesos (P1,150.00)** per set.
2. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before **2:00 P.M. of May 23, 2005** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date is declared non-working day, the new deadline for submission shall be announced through a Bid Bulletin. Submission of documents must be clear, legible and readable. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted.
3. Pre-bid conference will be held on **May 10, 2005 at 10:00 A.M.** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
4. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
5. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the corporation.
6. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – April 20 & 26, 2005)

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Warm your mom's heart with your deeply felt love note telling her how special she is to you. On May 8, Mother's Day, **INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS**, the widest reaching classifieds, will highlight a "Mother's Day special section" for personal ads dedicated to the first woman in all our lives.

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Happy Mama's Day!

Love,
Papa and Jing

1 col X 5 cm = P 500

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You're the best!

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1 col X 2 cm = P 100

Mama Karen,

Thanks for all you do.

Micro, Nicole, Gabby
AJ & Christion

1col X 3 cm = P 200

Nanay Nene,

Happy Mother's Day
&
Happy 75th Birthday!
We love you!

Lolo Pete, kids and apos

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If there was a day for everything you have given me as a mother, it would be Mother's day everyday.
I love you very much!

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Mommy Myria,

Thank you for always being there.

Happy Mother's Day!

We Love You!

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Earthday Jam 2005

THIS year's Earthday Jam gears for a bigger celebration as it hits the streets of Tomas Morato Avenue for an exciting street party. Make way for an explosive line up of artists from various genre that will jam and dedicate their music for Mother Earth. Performers include hot bands Parokya ni Edgar, Sponge Cola, Kitchie Nadal, Sugar Free with reggae favorite Browman Revival, True Faith, pop-rock artist Lou Bonnevie, world music exponents Grace Nono, Pinikpikan, Hairy Dawgs and Makiling Ensemble, environmentalist Chin Chin Gutierrez, the formidable RJ & Friends and pop artists Akafellas, PIDO with Take 1. Also featured is a hip hop/ rap segment with 7 Shots featuring SunValley Crew, Pikasso and various guest spinners. Hosts are executive producer Lou Bonnevie with MTV Philippines KC Montero. Theater and movie personalities along with prominent environmental personalities are expected to grace the occasion to indicate their support. Dimitri Productions, organizer and producer of Earthday Jam announces that Earthday Jam 2005 is free to the public. It is presented with the Local Government of Quezon City through its Environmental Protection Waste

Management Department in association with DENR and the Earthday Network Philippines. Overall show direction is by Toto Gentica. Participating sponsors include CEMEX Philippines, The Quezon City Solid Waste Contractors, Viva Mineral Water,

Superferry and MTV Philippines. Media Partners include the Philippine Star, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, JAM 88.3, Crossover, Joey and K-Lite. All these artists will come together for the first time on APRIL 22, at the Tomas Morato Avenue Strip in Quezon City simultaneous with the worldwide delebration of the Earthday movement. Scout Lascano (along Alfredo's Street) up to Gandia Street will be closed around 5 p.m. for the event as several table and chairs will be positioned along the street for people dine and party under the stars. Furthermore, there will be environmental booths from DENR around the area as well as volunteers that will help clean up the place and recycle all used up cans.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bids and Awards Committee – Head Office, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites BSP/G-EPS registered companies/ contractors and other interested suppliers to a public bidding for the following:

Quantity/ unit	Unit	Particulars	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
1	Lot	Document Scanning and Indexing of Approximately 4 million documents including purchase, delivery, installation and operationalization of 2 servers (1 unit primary server, 1 unit back-up server) per BSP scope of work and specifications	Php 4,450,000.00

Completion period: Four (4) months after receipt of the Purchase Order

Bid Documents are available from 19 April 2005 to 28 April 2005 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,225.00 at the following:

BAC Secretariat
Rm. 212, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Building
cor. A. Mabini and P. Ocampo Sr. Sts., Malate, Manila
Tel. No(s). 523-1321

Bidding Date and Time : 11 May 2005 at 10:00 A.M. Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, Malate
Place : Manila

Interested bidders shall submit not later than the bidding date and time the following documents in three (3) separate envelopes:

Envelope No. 1:

1. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers
2. Y2003 Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement and Balance Sheet)
3. Y2003 Income Tax Return duly stamped/received by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) or its duly Authorized Agent Bank or a Certified True Copy of Y2003 Income Tax Return issued by the Revenue District Officer of the BIR concerned (for electronic filing)
4. Valid and current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License
5. Prospective bidder's computation for its Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC, duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, i.e., financial statements and copies of on-going project contracts; or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid; or a certification from the bank stating that the bidder has a cash deposit with a holding period of at least one (1) month from the date of bidding. The commitment or cash deposit certificate shall be in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC. The NFCC shall be computed as follows: NFCC = [(Current assets – Current liabilities) (K)] minus value of all outstanding projects; K = 10
6. Sworn statement that the prospective bidder is not blacklisted from bidding in any Government Office, Agency, Corporation
7. Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check
8. Sworn certification by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative that each of the documents submitted is an original copy or a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original.
9. Affidavit of the prospective bidder that he or she or any officer of their corporation is not related to the Head of the Procuring Entity by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree
10. List of at least three (3) customer references (evidence of document scanning and indexing projects in at least two (2) government agencies or institutions) for the past three (3) years, on projects involving of at least 2M pages (paper and microfilm image conversion). This includes references sites for libraries, museums and other agencies involved in preservation initiatives. These references will include the following information.
    a. Total number of pages converted and time frame for conversion;
    b. Source format, paper film fiche
    c. End product
    d. Host system (hardware and software environments) on which the final product resides
    e. Customer contact names, address and phone numbers

Envelope No. 2:

1. Instructions to Bidders
2. Duly accomplished Certification/Undertaking
3. Original Bid Security
4. Brochure(s) of the unit(s) to be offered indicating the brand and model number and information necessary for evaluation purposes; and
5. Implementation Plan containing the activities to be undertaken including the timetable.

Envelope No. 3:

Price Proposal with attached cost breakdown

All envelopes shall be dropped in the bid box located at Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, 5-storey Building, BSP Main Complex. LATE BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

The BSP assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, Jr.
Chairman

(PDI – April 26, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Port of Zamboanga

NOTICE OF SALE

Pursuant to the provisions of Sections 2601 to 2610 of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, there will be a PUBLIC AUCTION SALE (sealed bidding) on May 3, 2005 at the Customs Conference Room, District XI, Port Area, Zamboanga City of the following articles:

Lot No.	Seizure Identification Number	Description	Location	Floor Price
1	S.I. 08-2004	350 sacks of Imported Rice @ 25 kgs/sack (good quality)	PPA Bodega	Php 375.00/sack
2	S.I. 11-2004	86 sacks Imported White Sugar @ 50 kgs/sack	PPA Bodega	Php 1,150.00/sack Exclusive of SRA Clearance Fee of Php 16.20/sack
3	S.I. 13-2004	27 sacks of Imported Rice @ 50 kgs/sack	PPA Bodega	Php 750.00/sack
4	S.I. 14-2004	21 sacks of Imported Rice @ 50 kgs/sack 2 sacks of Imported Rice @ 25 kgs/sack 19 sacks White Sugar @ 50 kgs/sack	PPA Bodega	Php 750.00/sack Php 375.00/sack Php 1,150.00/sack Exclusive of SRA Clearance Fee of Php 16.20/sack
5	S.I. 15-2004	4,466 sacks of Imported Rice @ 25 kgs/sack 99 sacks of Imported White Sugar @ 50 kgs/sack	NFA Bodega Pagadian City	Php 375.00/sack Php 1,150.00/sack Exclusive of SRA Clearance Fee of Php 16.20/sack
6	S.I. 17-2004	6 sacks of Imported Rice @ 25 kgs/sack 4 sacks of Imported Sugar @ 50 kgs/sack	PPA Bodega	Php 375.00/sack Php 1,150.00/sack Exclusive of SRA Clearance Fee of Php 16.20/sack
7	S.I. 19-2004	48 sacks of Imported rice @ 50 kgs/sack	PPA Bodega	Php 750.00/sack
8	S.I. 20-2004	65 sacks of Imported Rice @ 25 kgs/sack 4 sacks of Imported Sugar @ 50 kgs/sack	PPA Bodega	Php 375.00/sack Php 1,150.00/sack Exclusive of SRA Clearance Fee of Php 16.20/sack
9	S.I. 21-2004	1,923 sacks of Imported rice @ 25 kgs/sack	PPA Bodega	Php 375.00/sack
10	S.I. 25-2004	736 sacks of Imported Rice @ 25 kgs/sack 147 sacks of Imported White Sugar @ 50 kgs/sack	PPA Bodega	Php 375.00/sack Php 1,150.00/sack Exclusive of SRA Clearance Fee of Php 16.20/sack

For particulars, please see or call Atty. Vincent F. Fernandez, Chairman, Auction & Cargo Disposal Committee, Bureau of Customs, Port Area, Zamboanga City. Tel. No. (062) 992-6844.

NOTE:

There will be a pre-qualification conference for the prospective bidders on May 2, 2005 at the BOC Customs house, Port Area, Zamboanga City. Only those prequalified shall be allowed to participate in the bidding.

(Sgd.) ATTY. TOMAS L. ALCID, CESO VI
District Collector of Customs

(PDI – April 26, 2005)

OBITUARIES

"He giveth his beloved sleep."
(Elizabeth Barret Browning)

CORAZON SAYSON Y ABAD

(July 25, 1915 – April 22, 2005)

Retired Manager Insurance Co. of North America (now Cigna)

Peacefully died in her sleep at the age of 89.

Her bereaved family: Sisters **Mercedes** (†), **Rosario** (†) and **Remedios S. Ventenilla**; nephews and nieces: **Sister Mercy, Arabela V. Arcinue, Margarita V. Hamada, Bonifacio S. Ventenilla** and their spouses **Roberto, William** and **Conrada Data**; grandnephews and grandnieces, great grandnephews and great grandnieces, request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Ventenilla residence, 25 Bengson St., Lingayen, Pangasinan.

Interment will be at the Lingayen Catholic Cemetery on Tuesday, April 26, 2005 after the 2:30 PM Mass at the Epiphany of Our Lord Cathedral, Lingayen, Pangasinan.

The Board of Trustees, the President and General Manager, Executives and Employees of the Government Service Insurance System condole with the family of

Jacobo 'Jake' Cabanilla Clave

(November 27, 1927 - April 21, 2005)

former Chairman, GSIS Board of Trustees (1967-1985)

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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OBITUARIES

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The Board of Partners, Management and Staff of

ORTIGAS & COMPANY, LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

announce the passing of

DOÑA ASUNCION ORTIGAS de ORTIGAS

who joined her Creator on April 24, 2005
at the age of 95.

Her bereaved children: **Rafael** and **Begoña**, **Ignacio** and **Margarita**, **Rosario** and **Alberto**; grandchildren: **Maria Teresa**, **Maria Asuncion** and **Vicente**, **Rafael** and **Carmina**; **Ignacio** and **Xavier**; **Jose Luis**, **Maria del Mar** and **Maria Victoria**; great grandchildren: **Isabel**, **Mercedes**, **Margarita** and **Sofia**; sisters **Julia Ortigas de Campos** and **Amalia Ortigas de Olbes**; brothers-in-law, cousins, nephews and nieces, and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Holy Mass will be celebrated today, April 26, at 10:00 in the morning at the Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills.

Interment will be held at a later date.

Please omit flowers.

Rogad a Dios en caridad
por el alma de

ASUNCIÓN ORTIGAS de ORTIGAS

que falleció habiendo recibido los auxilios de la Santa Iglesia,
el 24 de abril 2005.

Sus afligidos hijos: **Rafael** y **Begoña**, **Ignacio** y **Margarita**, **Rosario** y **Alberto**; nietos **Maria Teresa**, **Maria Asunción** y **Vicente**, **Rafael** y **Carmina**; **Ignacio** y **Xavier**; **Jose Luis**, **Maria del Mar** y **Maria Victoria**; biznietas **Isabel**, **Mercedes**, **Margarita**, y **Sofia**; hermanas **Julia Ortigas de Campos** y **Amalia Ortigas de Olbes**; hermanos politicos, primos, sobrinos y demas parientes, ruegan al piadoso lector una oración por el eterno descanso de su alma.

Se celebrará una misa en sufragio de su alma hoy, martes, día 26 de abril, a las diez de la mañana en el Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills.

El entierro se verificará en familia. Se ruego no envien flores.

Your word is a lamp
to my feet and
light to my path.
Psalm 119-105

The star who cast our shadows away,
our simply beautiful and beloved;

CIARA MARIE A. ABALOS

peacefully joined our Creator on
April 22, 2005 at the age of 19.

Her loving parents Benhur and Menchie, grandparents Ben and Cora, Nestor and Zita, siblings Charisse Marie, Benjie, Charlene Marie and Corrine, her aunts, uncles, cousins, relatives, nieces and nephews Carlo and friends, request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie at No. 19 Kanlaon St., Mandaluyong City. Interment will be at Paradise Memorial Park in Mandaluyong City on Wednesday, April 27, after the 7:00 a.m. mass at the San Felipe Neri Church at Boni Avenue, also in Mandaluyong City.

We shall never forget the love we have for Jesus
and He will guide us.
Let Jesus be always in our hearts
to fill us with the spirit of oneness.

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS
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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS
FREE OBIT DESIGN

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..." Psalm 23:4

UNDP: RP economy can grow by 5.3% in '05

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE domestic economy can expand by 5.3 percent this year, hitting the lower end of the government's economic growth target, according to a socioeconomic survey by the United Nation's regional development arm.

In its 2005 survey, the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Escap) expected the country's expansion to slow down from the 15-year high growth level of 6.1 percent achieved last year.

But the gross domestic product (GDP) growth outlook of 5.3 percent in the survey was more optimistic than the forecasts made by multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank which, respectively, projected an expansion of only 4.7 percent and 5 percent for this year.

According to Escap's latest publication, "Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2005: Dealing with Shocks," the forecast already assumed that the external environment shall become less favorable.

It added that a higher growth rate could be achieved if external demand is sustained.

The Escap report came out at the University of Asia and the Pacific yesterday.

The government is targeting a growth rate of 5.3-6.3 percent, but has conceded that expansion may hit only 5 percent as a consequence of skyrocketing oil prices.

The Escap survey expects three other emerging markets in Southeast Asia to outpace the Philippines' growth performance this year, with Indonesia seen growing by 5.5 percent, while Thailand and Malaysia, by 6 percent.

Next year, the Philippines is seen growing by 5.2 percent, as against Indonesia's 5.7 percent, Malaysia's 6.1 percent and Thailand's 6.3 percent.

In 2004, the publication said the country's growth was sustained by strong external demand and domestic spending. Although investment was revived, spending on durable equipment slowed. The investment ratio remains comparatively low in the country.

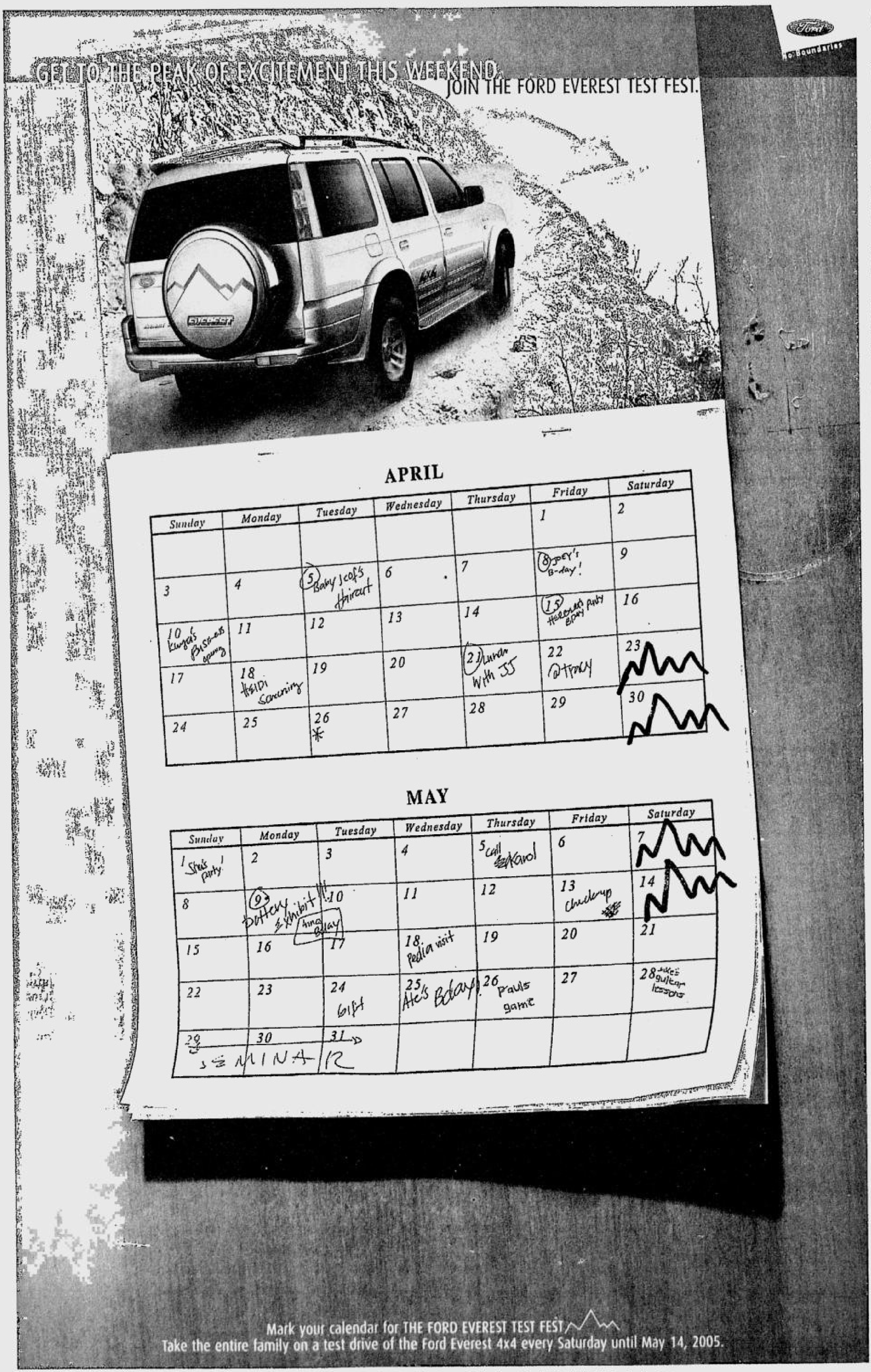
But the publication said poverty alleviation remained the overriding socioeconomic concern in the Philippines.

"The task of reducing poverty in the Philippines is hampered by economic growth that has failed to generate enough jobs for the growing labor force," the Escap publication said.

"To generate more jobs, the Philippines clearly needs more pro-poor growth but both consumer and investor confidence have been falling, in part owing to the parlous state of public finances, political instability, corruption and poor infrastructure."

High debt service cost, the publication added, had prevented higher budgetary allocation for much-needed improvements in infrastructure and social services.

While growth is not expected to be as spectacular as in 2004, the survey predicted that the Asia-Pacific would continue to be the fastest growing region in the world, with developing economies seen growing by an average of 6.2 percent this year.



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Corporate taxation plan dropped

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has dropped the proposed Simplified Net Income Tax System (SNITS) for corporate taxpayers.

A Finance official said that there was a policy shift in the DOF on the issue of plugging tax leakages and improving revenue collection from corporate taxpayers.

Instead of reducing allowable deductions, the DOF now believes that the Bureau of Internal Revenue should simply improve its administration to ensure corporate taxpayers do not abuse the income tax system by claiming false allowable deductions.

The proposed SNITS for corporate taxpayers was also dropped because of conflict with the Senate-backed proposal to hike corporate income tax rate from 32 to 35 percent.

The plan was one of the original revenue-raising measures set by the Arroyo administration to combat the fiscal problem, estimated to bring in P10 billion in additional annual revenue.

Under the SNITS, the income tax rate of corporate taxpayers will be reduced from 32 to 28 percent, but allowable deductions from their gross earnings in determining their taxable income will be slashed.

The DOF earlier pushed for SNITS, saying it was the appropriate response to the suspected huge revenue losses due to unscrupulous claims of allowable deductions by companies.

The DOF said companies belonging to the large taxpayers' sector were remitting an average income tax equivalent to only 2.38 percent of their gross income, while the ideal should be around 15 percent.

The scant revenue collection from large taxpayers was allegedly due to their practice of claiming too much allowable deductions.

RP to extend China trade restrictions

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PEOPLE'S Republic of China has granted the request of the Philippine government to extend the country's quantitative restrictions (QR) on rice imports, the Department of Agriculture yesterday said.

The DA said, however, that in exchange for the county's QR extension, the Philippines has acceded to provide China with a country-specific quota of 25,000 metric tons of rice a year.

China is one of the country's traditional sources of rice. The other two are Vietnam and Thailand.

China and eight other countries were among the other WTO member countries that opposed the country's bid to extend the quantitative restrictions on rice imports.

Others include Argentina, Australia, Canada, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Thailand and the Unites States of America.

The initial round of discussions for the memorandum of understanding with China started in June last year. After three rounds of meetings, China agreed to the request of the Philippines for a seven-year QR extension, or until 2012.

The Philippines will also increase its minimum market access volume of rice to 350,000 metric tons from 239,000 metric tons beginning this June, and maintain that level until the extension ends in 2012.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap yesterday said in a statement that the support of the Chinese to extend the QRs for rice was crucial to strengthening the domestic rice industry. It also provides the Philippines with enough time to be self-sufficient in rice.

The signing of the MOU supporting the Philippine request for the extension of quantitative restrictions for rice will be among the highlights of the official visit to the country this week of China President Hu Jintao.

LIFESTYLE

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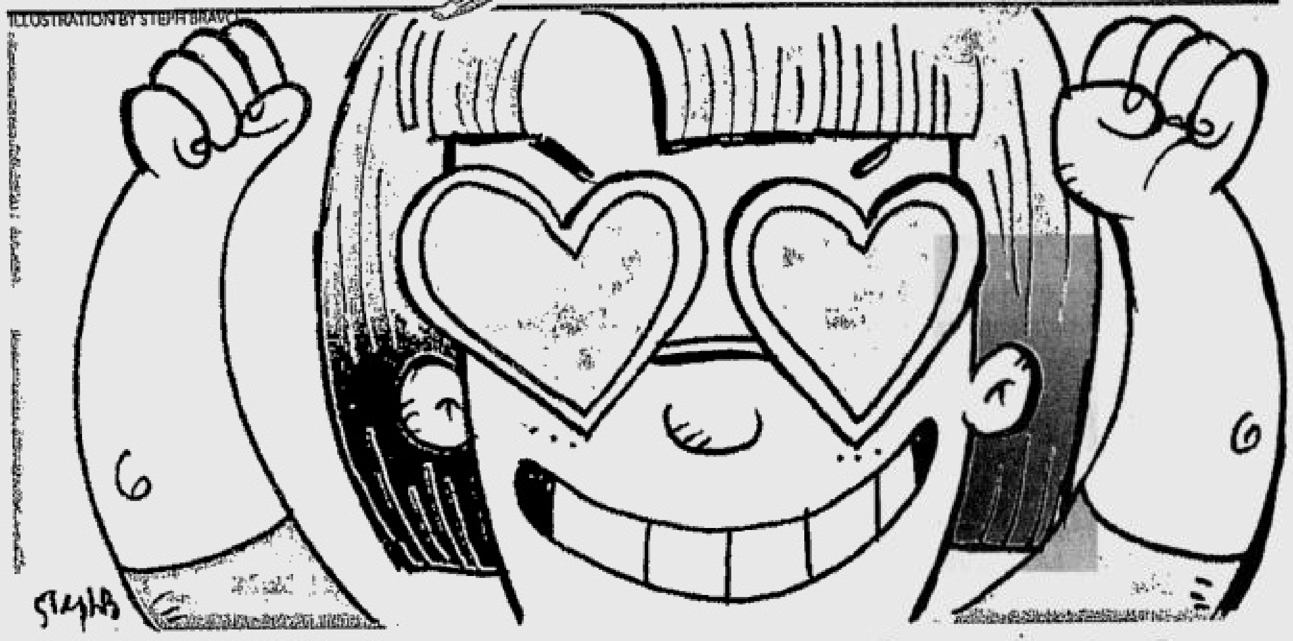

Have courage to face life

"The greatest threat to life and health is having nothing to live for."

—Deepak Chopra, M.D.

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

NO matter how you look at it, stress is a major problem. A key factor in preventing its damaging effects is your response to it.

Adaptability

Harvard psychologist George Vaillant proved this more than 50 years ago when he monitored the health of 185 men for 40 years. His discovery: A person who appeared healthy in youth, would most likely die prematurely or get sick if he responded poorly to stress.

"Of the men who had the best mental health, only two became chronically ill or died by age 53. Of the 48 men with the poorest mental health, however—18, almost 10 times as many—were chronically ill or dead by that age."

The body is a storehouse of energy. The energy gets drained when hopelessness sets in, when the desire for life is gone.

Adaptability questionnaire

If you want to understand yourself better, try this test.

Assign points:

almost never applies - 0 points
sometimes applies - 1 point
usually applies - 2 points
almost always applies - 3 points

1. When I am first confronted with a problem and have no idea how it can be solved, I take the attitude that the right answer will emerge.
2. Events in my life happen with their own right timing.
3. I am optimistic about my future.
4. When someone rejects me, I am hurt, but I accept that the decision was theirs to make.
5. I feel the loss of family and friends who died, but the grief resolves itself and I move on. I don't try to bring back what cannot be brought back.
6. I feel committed to ideals larger than myself.
7. When arguing with someone, I defend my position, but I also find it easy to acknowledge the rightness in the other side.
8. I vote the person, not the party.
9. I donate time to worthwhile causes, even if they are unpopular.
10. I am considered a good listener. I don't interrupt others when they talk.
11. If someone has a lot of emotion at stake in something, I hear them out without expressing my views.
12. Given a choice between a high-salaried job that is fairly boring and a job I like doing at half the pay, I'll take the job I love.
13. My style of managing other people is to allow them to do what they want rather than try to control them. I interfere as little as possible.
14. I find it easy to trust others.
15. I am not prone to worry. The ups and downs of difficult situations affect me less than most other people.
16. In a competitive situation, I am a good loser. I will say, "Good game," not "I wasn't at my best."
17. Being right in every situation isn't all that important to me.
18. I feel comfortable playing with young children. I enter their world easily.
19. I don't think about my moods very much.
20. I can easily feel what someone else is feeling.
21. Quiet people make me feel comfortable. Nervous people don't make me nervous.

Total score:

Evaluating your score

50 points or over: You are exceptionally adaptable and has spent a long time on personal growth. Others seek you for guidance and advice. You give high priority to your ability to remain comfortable under pressure and readily accept new challenges. You pride yourself in being able to resolve conflicts well.

30-40 points: You are reasonably adaptable to everyday challenges, but the amount of work you have put into this area has probably been limited. You are the kind of person that others consider easygoing, but you are likely to have more worries and regrets that you haven't faced-up to. Conflicts upset you, and you tend to fall under the influence of people with stronger emotions.

20-30 points: You have definite ideas of right and wrong behavior, and put a high priority on defending your point of view. Personal growth has not been high on your priorities so far. You are likely to be well organized and decidedly goal-oriented. If you find yourself in a situation of conflict or competition, you really want to be on the winning side.

Under 20 points: Your sense of self needs considerable work. Dominated by one or both parents as a child, you fear rejection and become upset or critical when others disagree with you. You have your way of doing things and do not like surprises. You are likely to be obsessively orderly, with lots of hidden worry, or else very disorganized, reacting strongly to one external event after another.

This test does not aim to make you think less or more of yourself but to stimulate you to a better inner growth.

Keeping the faith

The glorious life, it is said, is only reserved for those who value every moment on Earth. But the glorious life requires you to have the courage to face life's challenges no matter how painful, including the pain of powerlessness and feeling unloved and unlovable.

Gary Zukav, in "The Heart of the Soul," says "your painful emotions tell you what needs to be changed in you, not in other people." Stressful situations call attention to your strength or weakness. You can triumph or fail.

The basis of glory is faith, the best medicine for fear. Faith declares: "Life is good. God is good. I am good."

Affirm life now so that life will affirm you.

Life drink

Take a full glass of water in small, slow sips each time you feel stressed. Sit back, relax. Breathe slowly but deeply with each sip.

Chill-out splash

When faced with powerful depressing thoughts and feelings, take a cold shower or splash iced water on your face and around your neck.

Love and light!

> Accept challenges no matter how difficult, including feeling powerless and being unloved and unlovable

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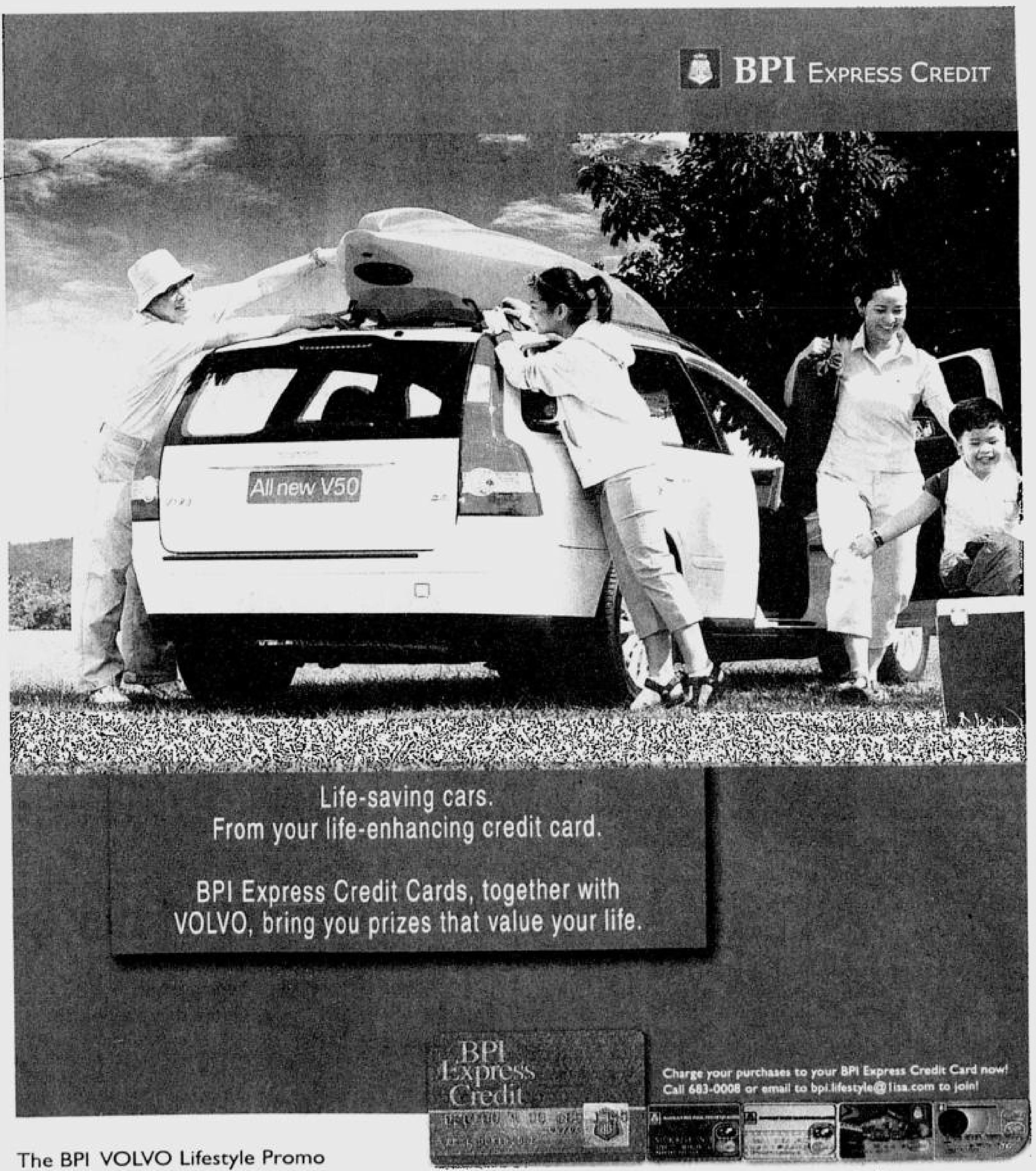
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Every ₱500 single purchase gives you one raffle entry. To join, register your purchases by calling the promo hotline: 683-0008 for Metro Manila callers; 1-800-10-683-0008 for callers outside Metro Manila.

You can also register your purchases through email: bpi.lifestyle@1isa.com. Just email the following purchase information as they appear in your charge slip: (1) 16-digit BPI Express Credit card number (2) transaction amount, including centavos (3) transaction date: mm/dd/yy (4) transaction time: hh/mm.

VOLVO V50 Sports Wagon. Prize for BPI Express Credit Classic/Burgundy or BPI Express Credit Blue MasterCard

VOLVO S80 Executive Sedan. Prize for BPI Express Credit Gold MasterCard

NEW! VOLVO S40 Sports Sedan Prize for BPI Express Credit Edge and Mini Edge*
*Approved by DTI-NCR

For BPI Express Credit: Classic/Burgundy, Blue MasterCard, Gold MasterCard, Edge and Mini Edge, promo period is from November 15, 2004 to April 30, 2005. See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No 3121 Series of 2004.

Petron-BPI Express Credit

Every ₱500 Petron fuel purchase in participating Petron stations gives you one raffle coupon. To join, fill up the coupon and drop in drop boxes at these stations.

VOLVO XC90 SUV. Prize for Petron-BPI Express Credit

For Petron-BPI Express Credit, promo period is from October 21, 2004 to April 30, 2005. See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No 2521, Series of 2004

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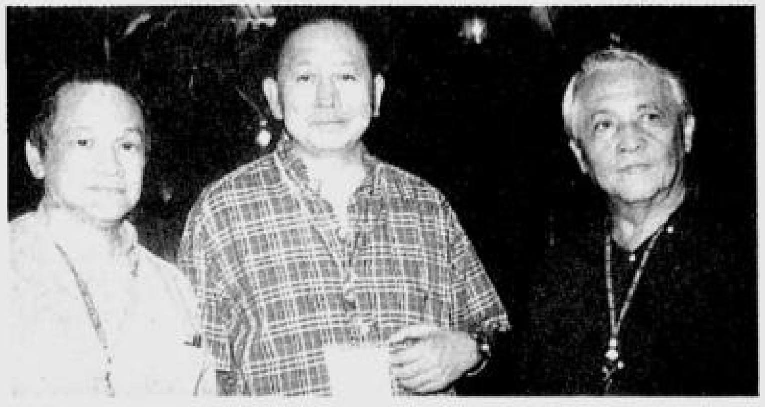
Approved applications during the promo period will also earn raffle entries. For application and inquiries, call BPI Express Phone 89-100, visit any BPI or BPI Family Bank branch or Express Banking Center or log on to www.bpiexpressonline.com. Actual unit may vary from photo

VOLVO
for life

THE WIVES. Elena Apostol, Rosie Cheng, Merle Fajardo and Zenny Fernando. Standing: Rachel Villanueva, Baby Valenzuela, Ophie Mella, Queenie Mills and the hostess of the luau, Betsy Tenchavez

CUSTOMS collector Tom Apacible, Sid Reyes, Gerry Contreras, Manny Estacion, Chicos Luciano, Melo Santiago and Alex Bautista



MARIO Soriano, former hotshot of Duty Free Philippines, with Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank VP Manny Estacion and Hino-Nissan Phils. president Bimbo Mills

Red lions roar and purr

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

THE SAN BEDA'S roaring lions had a heck of a time at their weeklong reunion, with a caravan of high school Class '62 Balikbayan Bedans from the windy city of Chicago, my favorite city New York, California, Oregon and even cold Canada, together with local former classmates, *palanggas*.

It all started at the South Forbes posh mansion of renowned architect par excellance and party-giver **Gerry Contreras**, no less. The HS '62 gang, with their wives, learned fancy footsteps from dance professionals. Not to be outdone, Smart and PLDT's head honcho, brilliant hotshot **Manny Pangilinan**, as in "MVP," honored his former classmates with a cocktail soiree at a premier watering hole at Fort Boni. *Apres*, he hosted the group at the chic Red and White Ball at the NBC Tent.

Next day the gang was at the Dasmariñas hideout of **Erap's** super pal, **Melo Santiago**, who served the finest wines and nouvelle cuisine, being the connoisseur that he is, dahlings.

But the highlight of the trip was a fab weekend visit to Subic, courtesy of low-key magnum businessman **Bob Tenchavez**, but who else.

The Bedans and their wives were treated to a yummy Filipino lunch buffet at Bob's awesome forested vacation place. A grand tour of the former American naval base followed. The day was capped by a colorful Hawaiian luau, with Polynesian dancers, natch, at Bob's well-manicured garden.

The rah-rah gang of '62 sang their favorite songs from days gone by with the Philippines' very own "Ray Charles," **Andrew Jabagat** of Subic Yacht Club.

The next day, **Chichos Luciano**, Clark Development chief executive officer, threw a grand luncheon for the *tres* satisfied Bedans.

Back in Manille, the HS '62 bunch had a winding-up party, a dinner-dance at the mega out-of-this-world gorgeous penthouse of the host with the most, Gerry Contreras, at Gercon Plaza in Salcedo Village, Makati. Here it was cold beer that overflowed, courtesy of San Miguel Packaging president **Bert Villa-Abrille.**

Back to the jungle, outstanding Bedan classmates—insurance mogul **Sauro Cotaco** and former Speaker **Noli Fuentebella**, plus all the other hot lions—agreed that it took a roaring Red Lion to survive the asphalt jungle out there.

What a great week and a total package of fun to remember, *palanggas*.

100 denim years

Yes, you've come along a long way, buddy. That renowned brand Wrangler celebrated 100 years of denim history with the fab Bluebell Collection Party, *palanggas*, held at the M Cafe of the Ayala Museum in Greenbelt. Our town's hip party animals celebrated the centennial in real cool denim gear.

Already a tremendous hit in Europe as well as hip Tokyo, a special selection from the vintage, limited edition Wrangler Bluebell Collection, was flown in for this happening and presented in a fast-paced mini show hosted by pretty-pretty **Erika Fife** during the dressed down but ultimately glam evening.

Apres the show, it was cocktail time, with Couchlab and petite designer-cum-singer **Kate Torralba** providing music and entertainment, *palanggas*.

Buzzing around with drinks in hand while nibbling on the yummy hors d'oeuvres were fashion whiz **Rhett Eala**; happy-in-love dude, businessman **Joel Ong**, with the gal of his dreams, **Cheese Ledesma**; gorgeous hunks **Cowboy Santos** and **Carlo Garchitorena**; models **Avi Siwa**, **Honey Obusan** and **Cat Juan**; lovey-dovey pair, hot PR gent **GP Reyes** and **Chicho Suarez**; funny and fave host **RJ Ledesma**; events expert **Pixie Chea**; and Big Fish's hot-hot **Domini Primero**.

Hey, how classic can a denim event be, *n'est-ce pas* (as in, *di bala*?)

Dinner show

Retro music lovers will dig "Dance for Life," a dinner show featuring three super hot retro bands—Spirit of '67, Flintstones and the Gang, and 8 Track. They will rock you on your feet, and make you dance, dance, dance.

Mark the date, *palanggas*, Friday, April 29, at the Grand Ballroom of the five-star Bellevue Hotel Manila at North Bridgeway, Northgate Cyberzone, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang. Doors will swing open at 6:30 p.m. Show time is 8:30 p.m.

Okay, people, tickets are at P1,500, inclusive of dinner. It'll be a fun night, and you can help raise funds for Bantay Bata 163.

For ticket inquiries call 8867869, or text or call 0917-8516600. Shake a leg, *palanggas*, and help a kid in need.

LAS VEGAS-based Bunny Arville, Chicago-based Fred Tsai and host Bob Tenchavez

FEARLESS Ombudsman Lot Gonzalez and mega architect Gerry Contreras

SAN MIGUEL'S Bert Villa-Abrille and UP professor and management guru Rene Azurin

HOT lion Manny V. Pangilinan hosted his pals at the Tent.

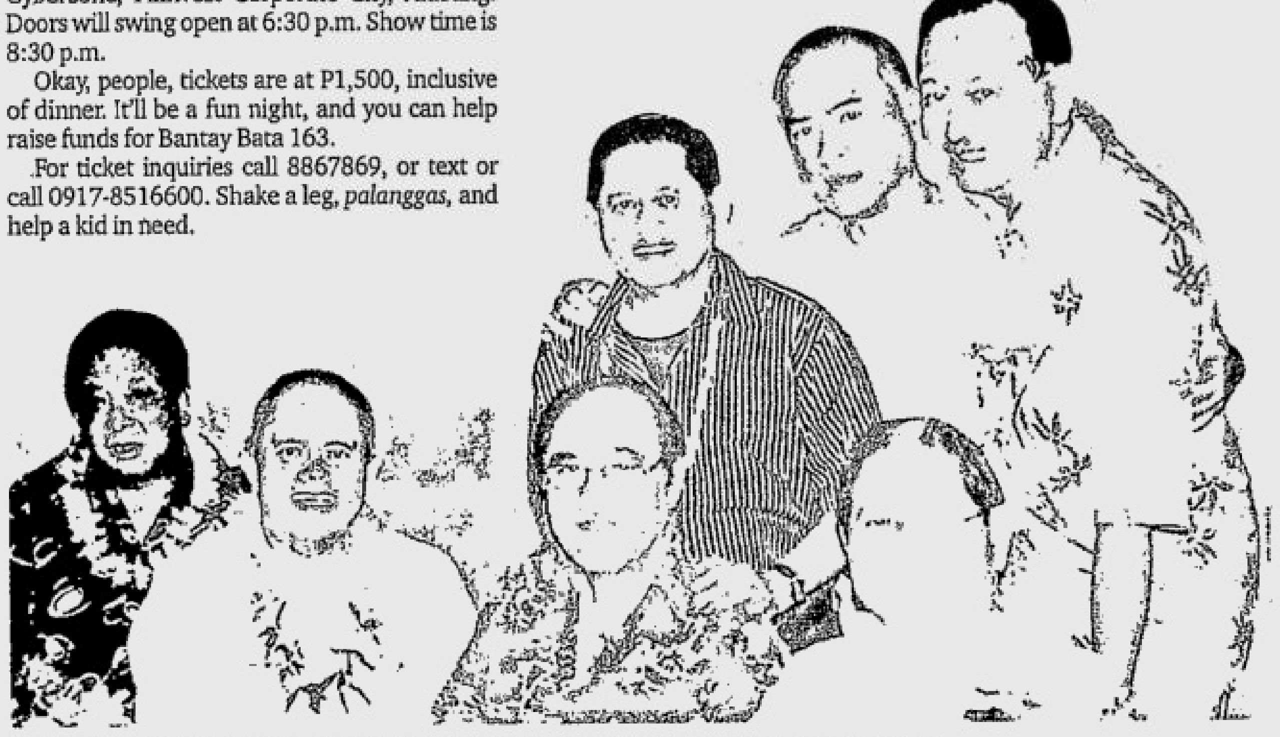
LABOR leader Bobby Oca

FRANK Sityar and top ad executive Joey Venezuela

CUPID HITS BULL'S EYE: Super new PR on the block Chico Suarez and GP Reyes

GALS IN THE SCENE: Pixie Chea and Mitch Chopitea

TURNING HEADS: Cat Juan, Carlos Garchitorena and Cowboy Santos, all Wrangler models



BENNY dela Cruz, Bunny Arville and Jun Dalton, with their mega host Bob Tenchavez. Standing: Willie Leong, Danny Cheng and Manny Estacion

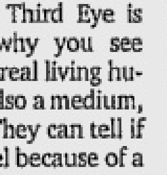
THE WINNING TEAM: Mega achiever Carmina Sanchez with Wrangler's brand manager Em Lingao and Joel Ong, winner of a Wrangler vintage piece

WRANGLER'S hotshot Ed Ang and Big Fish's Domini Primero

8 TRACK

Psychic unaware of her 'gifts'

INNER AWARENESS



Jaime T. Licauco

A WORRIED housewife we shall call Maria Rosa related numerous psychic experiences since she was a child. She would want to know what to make of these experiences.

Here's a summary of her story and my commentary:

Seeing ghosts and other invisible creatures

At 8 years old, she could see ghosts but thought they were real people because they appeared solid. "I see them everywhere, in my house, in school, in the cemetery and even in the mall," she said. "I also saw boxes moving under my grandma's bed."

In high school, at the wake for a priest, "I saw the dead priest in the coffin but he was colored green. I think he died of stomach cancer."

On her graduation, her grandmother died and was buried in the same cemetery as the priest. She visited her grandma's grave often, but every time she was there she felt somebody breathing down her neck.

One day, she woke up at 2 a.m. to take her barking dog for a walk. When she went back to bed she heard the toilet flush, though she knew everybody was asleep. She told her parents about it, but they did not believe her.

The following day, her dog woke her up as usual. When she went back to bed, she was pushed from behind. She glanced at the toilet and saw in her mind's eye a person in white. When told, her parents said she watched too many horror films.

When the manifestations continued, she asked her parents to have a priest bless the house, specially the toilet. But the "man" was still there though he could not approach her because she always had a rosary.

Then she met a religious minister with psychic powers, who told her what was happening had something to do with what she saw in the cemetery. Her father and brother went to the cemetery and, while praying, a green man in white appeared on the wall. It was the priest she saw before.

Maria Rosa, your experiences clearly indicate you are clairvoyant. Your so-called Third Eye is fully open that's why you see ghosts as if they are real living human beings. Being also a medium, you attract spirits. They can tell if a person is a channel because of a special light emanating from him/her.

Ordinary blessings by priests will not get rid of earthbound spirits and elementals. But if the priest is clairvoyant, able to see and talk to disturbing entities, then he can be very effective.

Seeing events before they happen

"I saw the EDSA revolution when I was still in college," said Maria Rosa. "I saw the earthquake in Baguio with lots of kids crying. I could feel and hear screams when disasters were going to happen, as if they were happening at that moment. Unfortunately, I could not tell when the events would occur.

"I felt an emotional pain before my ex-boyfriend left me. I saw the aura of my new boyfriend when I said yes to him. He became my husband.

"I saw my daughter fall 15 minutes before (it happened) in exactly the same manner I saw it.

"I told my niece her former boyfriend was engaged to another girl whom he did not love, but he couldn't do anything about it. It was a (arranged) marriage. He decided to take the inheritance rather than my niece. I also told her he would get married in three months' time." Everything happened as Maria Rosa predicted.

She also told her niece another man was really in love with her. He was wearing a white shirt with buttons on the side and was in the medical profession. She saw him looking out an airplane window.

Maria Rosa told her niece to grab him as he was really good. Her niece was amazed. Somebody fitting that description was indeed courting her. He regularly visited his brother in Japan.

Maria Rosa also dreamt three times of her father in a coffin months before he died.

The psychic ability involved in knowing the future is called "precognition," which literally means "to know before." It is clear you have strong precognitive abilities, too.

You are lucky to have these psychic powers, but I also realize they can sometimes be a burden. No one wants to see deaths or accidents involving family members. But this ability is part of your personality, and you have to accept it. What you can do is develop this part of you that you have been ignoring for so long.

Do not be bothered by what other people may say. Some misinformed people may consider you weird, but if you do not display or flaunt your powers, you will be all right. You can even help people.

Read my books on the subject and attend seminars to understand this science better. Yes, it is a science, with its own principles, methods and rules.

Many men and women have the same psychic experiences. You are not alone.

Address letters to this column to Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati City. Call 8107245 or 8926806 for information on seminars I conduct. E-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph or visit http://www.jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program 7-8 p.m. every Sunday.

Health Options
SLEEP APNEA

Magazine 'reveals' the truth about pleasure

WHAT really pleases people is pretty mundane, according to Kathleen McGowan's article on the Pleasure Paradox featured in the "Publisher's Page" of the March/April issue of Healthy Options News Digest.

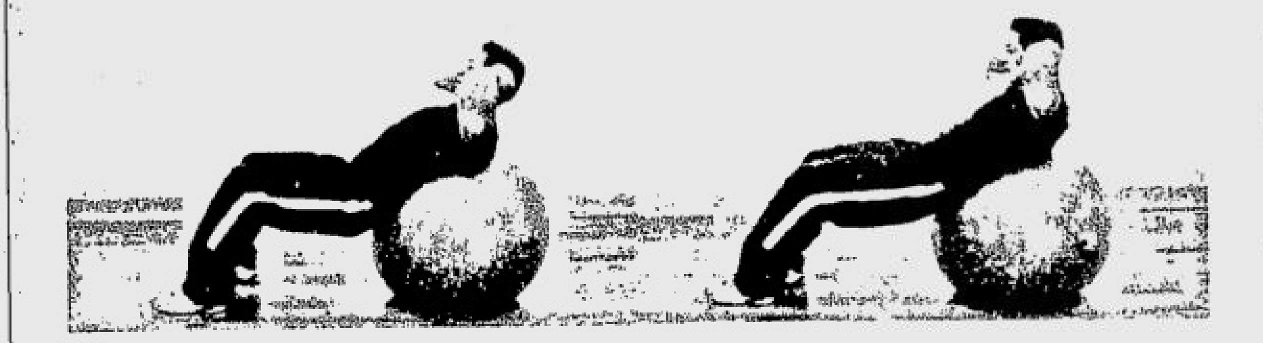
The publication offers health tips, facts, and information to help you maintain a healthy lifestyle.

It is offered free to customers of Healthy Options, the natural products store with branches located at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati; 2/L of Festival Supermall, Filinvest, Alabang; ground level of Ayala Center, Cebu City; ground floor of SM City North Edsa; 2/L of SM Manila and SM Pampanga; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; 2/L of SM Megamall B, Edsa Mandaluyong City.

For more information, visit their website at www.healthy options.com.ph.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Incline crunch on stability ball



STRENGTHENS abdominal muscles

Equipment:
Stability ball

Exercise technique:

1. Start by sitting on the ball with your legs hip width apart.
2. Slowly lower yourself into an inclined position by walking your feet forward while you simultaneously lean backward.
3. Once the ball is behind your lower back, place your hands behind your head. This is the starting position.
4. Curl your upper body bringing the bottom of your ribcage toward the top of your hipbones.
5. Return to the starting position.

Performance tips:

1. Exhale as you curl up; inhale as you uncurl.
2. Tilt your pelvis (curl it toward your ribcage) when you perform the incline crunch.
3. Place your fingers lightly at the sides of your head.

Repetitions:
12-15 repetitions

Dying to be thin

From page C4

years. An irreversible side effect is loss of bone density that can cause osteoporosis or brittle bones.

Research has found that anorexics and bulimics have brain chemistry irregularities, but it cannot yet be determined if this is cause or effect of the disorders. But one does not become anorexic or bulimic overnight. The problem usually starts during the teenage years.

Examples of disordered or dysfunctional eating are the use of laxatives, diuretics or sweating techniques, crash dieting, skipping meals, fasting and obsessive calorie, carbohydrate or fat counting. In susceptible people, disordered eating can become an eating disorder.

We are all born with a specific body type and structure. Trying to be skinny when we are naturally more voluptuous can only lead to frustration and damage to health. We need to accept, respect and celebrate our unique body type.

* * *

The Muay Philippine Team will hold an exhibition mall tour on April 27, 4 p.m., at SM North Edsa, and April 30, 4 p.m., at SM City Manila. For free demos in your gym, call 0917-8131238.

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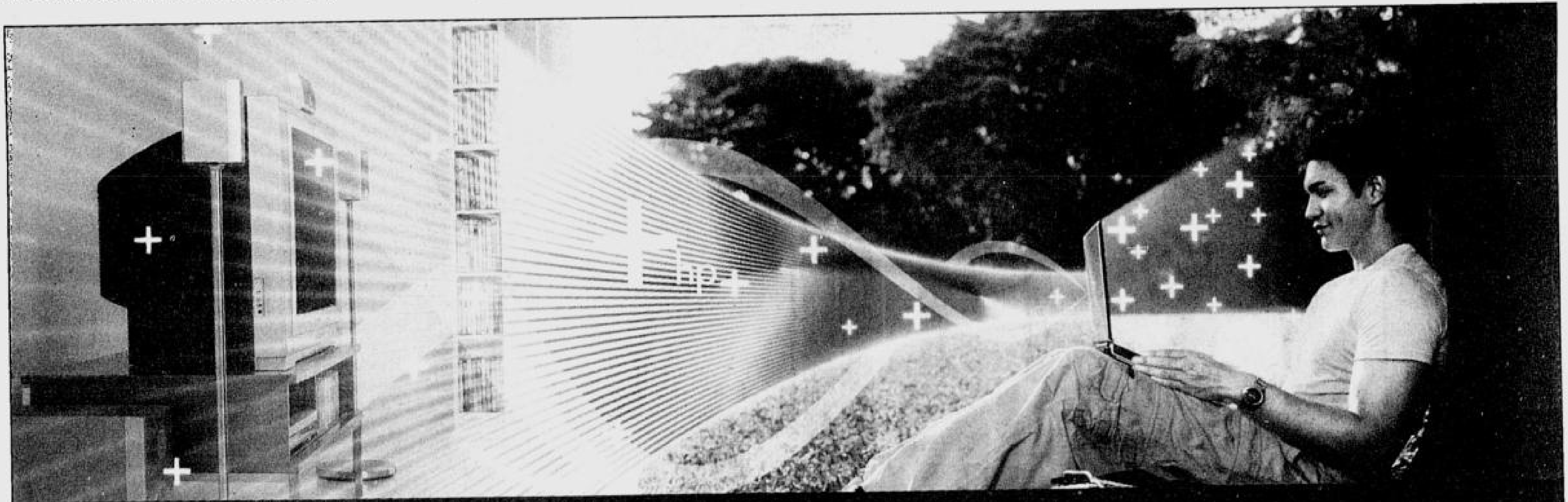

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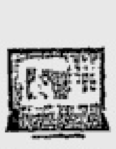
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How is leukemia treated?

Take Charge Doc!

The hallmark treatment for leukemia is through chemotherapy. The choice of drugs to be used depends on the patient's age, type of leukemia, and whether it is acute or chronic.

A combination of drugs is usually administered intravenously and orally in cycles. This is especially true for acute cases. The aim for the chemotherapy is to remove or destroy all the leukemic cells in the blood and in bone marrow. Once this is achieved, further treatment is given to make sure that all the leukemic cells (not visible by conventional studies) are eliminated. This is then followed by maintenance therapy, the duration of which varies dependent upon the leukemia type. This can range from six months to as long as two years.

During the administration of these potent medicines, various complications may set in such as infection and bleeding. These are usually treated with intravenous antibiotics and blood transfusion.

This week's answer to our feature question on leukemia was provided by our accredited provider in The Medical City (TMC) Hospital, Dr. Norma Martinez-Ona. Doc Norma finished her studies in Medicine at the University of the Philippines-PGH. She later took residency training for a specialization in Internal Medicine followed by a subspecialization in Hematology. Dr. Ona is a Fellow to the Phil. Society of Hematology and Blood Transfusion and Phil. Society of Oncologists. She is also affiliated with the International Society of Hematology-Asia Pacific Region and the American Association of Blood Banks. Currently, Dr. Ona is an Associate Professor at the College of Medicine of the University of the Philippines and the Head of the Blood Bank of the Phil. General Hospital. She is also a consultant to the Victor R. Potenciano Medical Center and TMC.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

[illegible]

Dying to be thin

WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

THE EATING disorders anorexia and bulimia, with food as the substance of abuse, have been called "suicide in slow motion." They can cause serious physical and psychological problems and even lead to death.

Anorexia or "voluntary starvation" has the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses according to Canada's National Eating Disorders Information Center. It kills 12 times more adolescent girls than all other causes combined.

Fewer deaths are attributed to bulimia or "binge-and-purge behavior" even though it is more common than anorexia. But it can be just as lethal. Terri Schiavo, who was in the center of a recent right-to-die controversy in the United States, had cardiac arrest due to bulimia-induced hypokalemia or abnormally low levels of potassium in the blood.

Abuse of emetics (medication to induce vomiting), slimming teas, laxatives and diuretics (products that increase urine production) can cause electrolyte imbalance and cardiac arrest.

It's a pity that in the Schiavo controversy, the message that bulimia could kill was lost.

One lesson to be learned from it was bulimia could be deceiving. She was not thin when she went into cardiac arrest. Bulimics can look perfectly healthy even though they are throwing up many times a day or taking 50-100 laxatives daily.

Unlike anorexics, bulimics are usually of normal weight or just slightly underweight so loved ones do not suspect anything is wrong. Even if they find the eating behavior strange, they may think it is not dangerous just like Schiavo's husband and friends.

Psychologist Doug Bunnell, president of the National Eating Disorders Association, told the Associated Press that the image of someone with an eating disorder as an emaciated woman was not the reality. "They don't get down that low. The face of eating disorders is your next-door neighbor's daughter or maybe your own."

Here are two famous eating disorder deaths and the lessons to be learned from them.

Christy Henrich

At one time, Henrich was the third-ranking female gymnast in the US. Like many women athletes, a gold medal was her main goal. Her battle with anorexia and bulimia began in 1988 when a judge told her to lose weight to improve her performance and qualify for the US Olympic team. Henrich weighed only 90 pounds then.

She died in 1994 at the age of 22 from multiple organ failure. Though she weighed 65 pounds then, at one point she only weighed 47 pounds.

Research prompted by her led to the discovery of the "female athlete triad," a condition with interrelated symptoms of disordered eating, loss of menstrual cycle and reduced bone density.

Chief researcher Debra Rhea said, "Eating disorders among female athletes are among the most serious problems facing this population and parallels the seriousness of anabolic steroid use in male athletes."

Cathy Rigby, 1972 Olympic gymnast, survived her fight with anorexia and bulimia but she suffered two cardiac arrests. Other Olympic gymnasts who admitted having eating disorders were Kathy Johnson and Nadia Comaneci.

Lessons

Athletes with eating disorders are in double jeopardy of sudden death from cardiac arrest because, aside from depriving their bodies of much-needed nutrients, they also train hard. This can lead to electrolyte imbalances and cardiac arrhythmias (deviations from the heart's normal rhythm). Experts warn that non-athletes who diet severely and exercise excessively can also be in danger.

Anybody who considers weight important for their performance or advancement of their career needs to be aware of the risk of developing unhealthy eating or exercise patterns. Coaches, trainers, fashion and television mentors should also watch what they say and the pressure they exert on their talents to lose weight.

Words are powerful. People do not realize the psychological damage they may be causing when they tell a teenage girl or boy that s/he is fat, plump or chubby.

Karen Carpenter

Karen Carpenter was the first celebrity to die of anorexia and bulimia. Her death was the catalyst for true public awareness of eating disorders.

A chubby teenager, she started dieting at 16, lost 25 pounds and became obsessed with losing more. When she collapsed on stage in 1975, she weighed only 80 pounds.

Though Carpenter sought professional help, the damage had already been done leading to her sudden death at 32 in 1983. Her heart was weakened by years of self-inflicted abuse.

Lessons: The physical effects of eating disorders can haunt you for

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New drug controls hepatitis B better

A NEW hepatitis B treatment may make daily and lifelong medication no longer necessary.

Results of studies on the use of the treatment were presented during the 14th biennial conference of the Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver.

Peginterferon alfa 2-a has been shown to treat both HbeAG-positive and HbeAG-negative chronic hepatitis B. It removes the need for daily and potentially lifelong therapy for the disease.

Studies presented during the conference showed that the drug was superior to what was currently the most commonly prescribed medication for Hepatitis B.

The new Hepa B medication stimulated the immune system and inhibited virus replication.

Chronic Hepatitis B is a major global health problem affecting more than 350 million people. It is one of the causes of liver failure, cirrhosis and liver cancer. Between one-quarter and one-third of people with chronic hepatitis B will develop progressive liver disease. About one million annually die from liver disease making it the 10th leading cause of death worldwide.

Meanwhile, the first International Conference on the Management of Patients with Viral Hepatitis held in Paris recently was informed that hepatitis B could now be brought under control and hepatitis C could actually be cured.

Some 170 million people are infected with the hepatitis C virus across the globe. Hepatitis C is the cause of 60 percent of primary liver cancers and the number one cause of liver transplants in the world.

Prof. Patrick Marcellin said about one-third of the world's population was infected with Hepatitis B and 350 million people were chronic carriers of the virus and had the potential to transmit it.

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